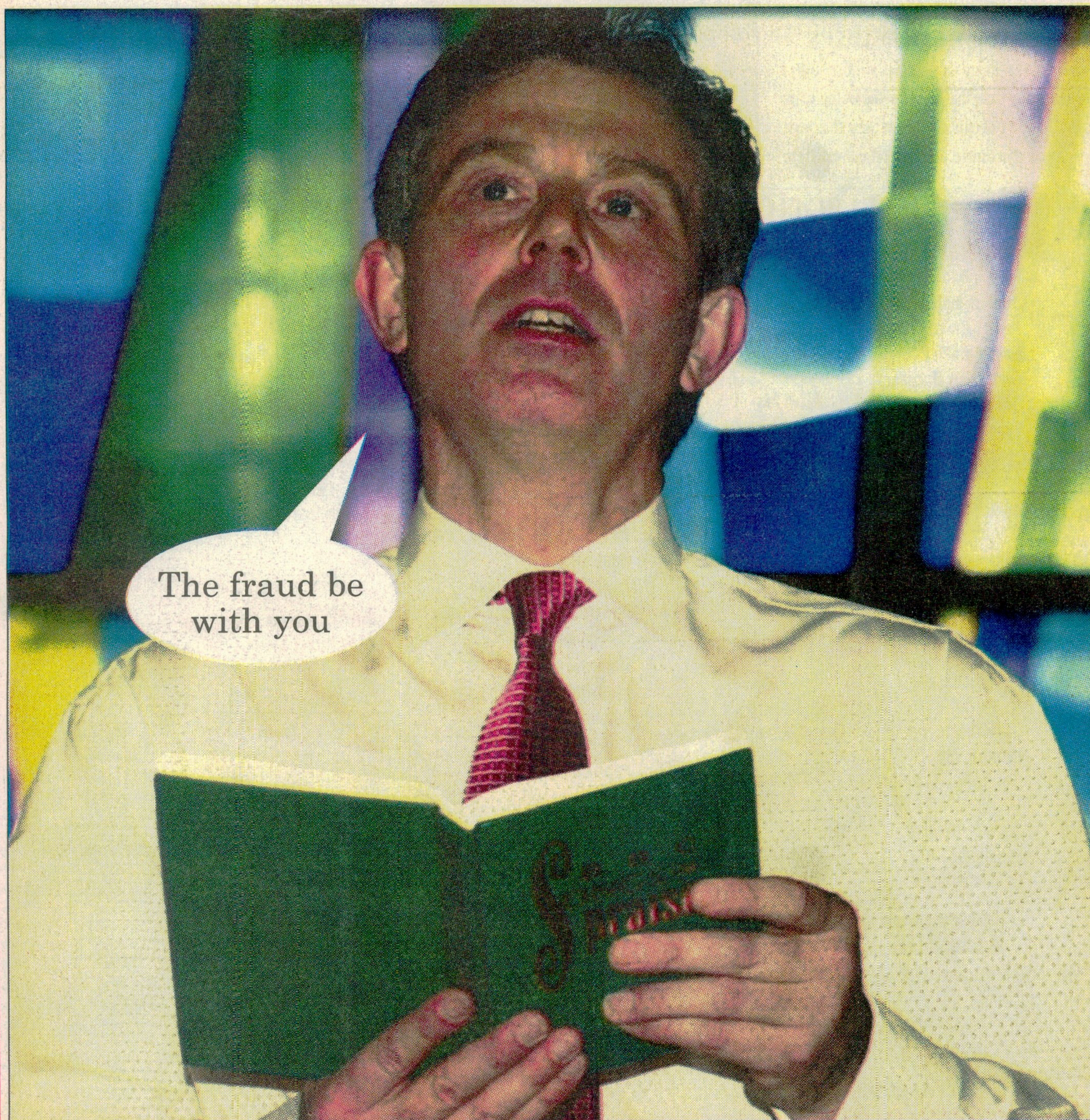




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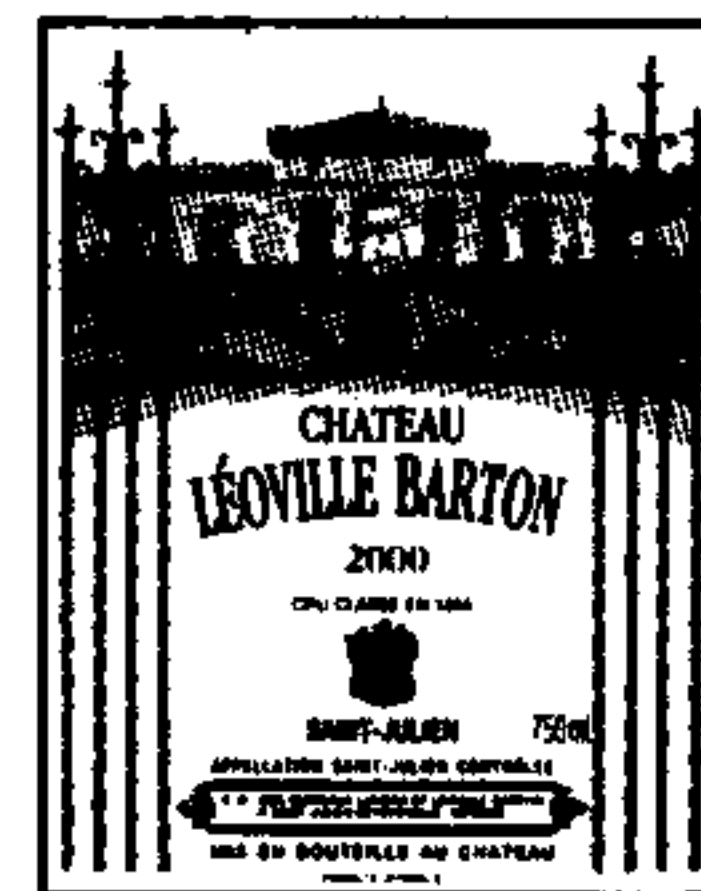
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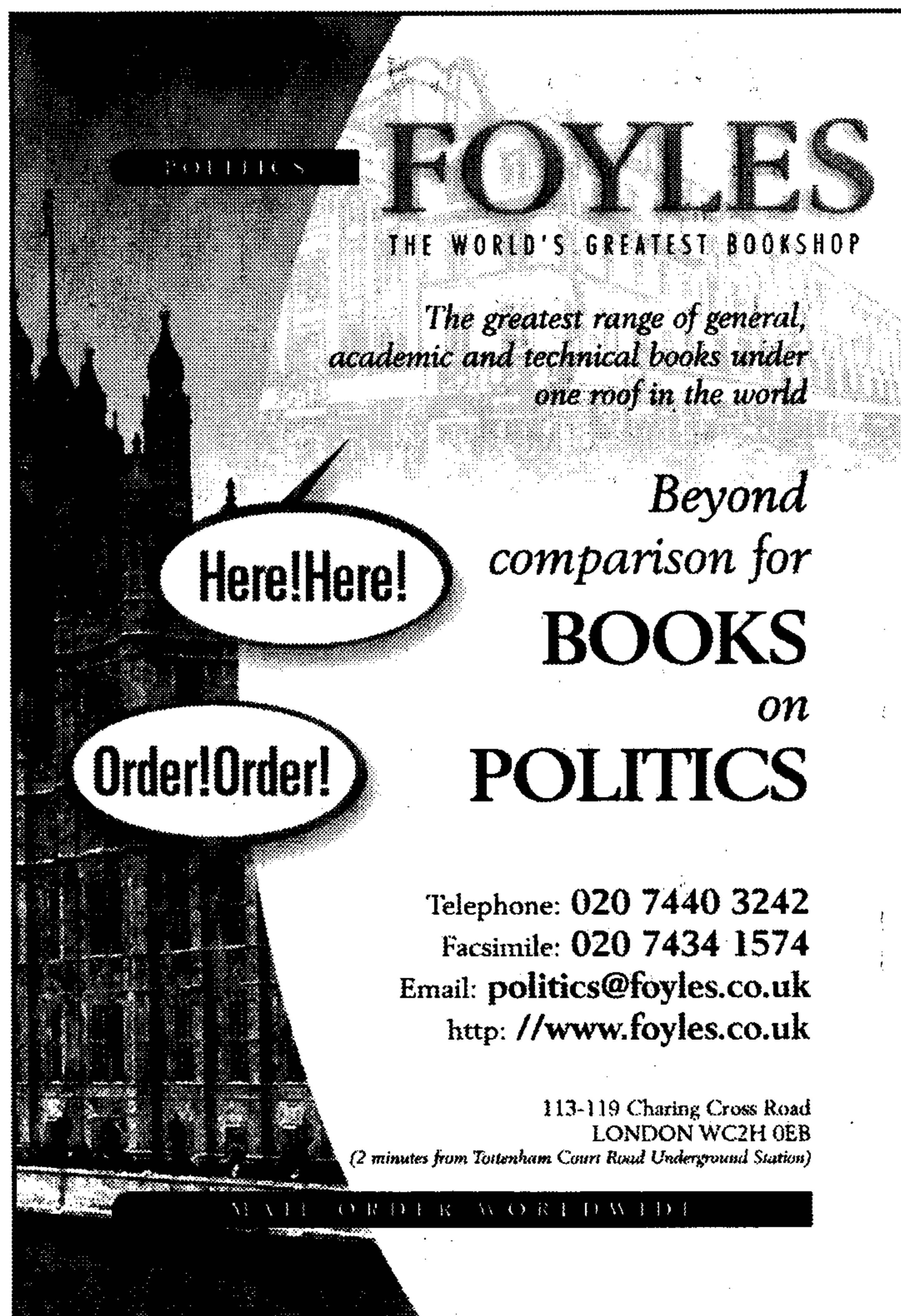
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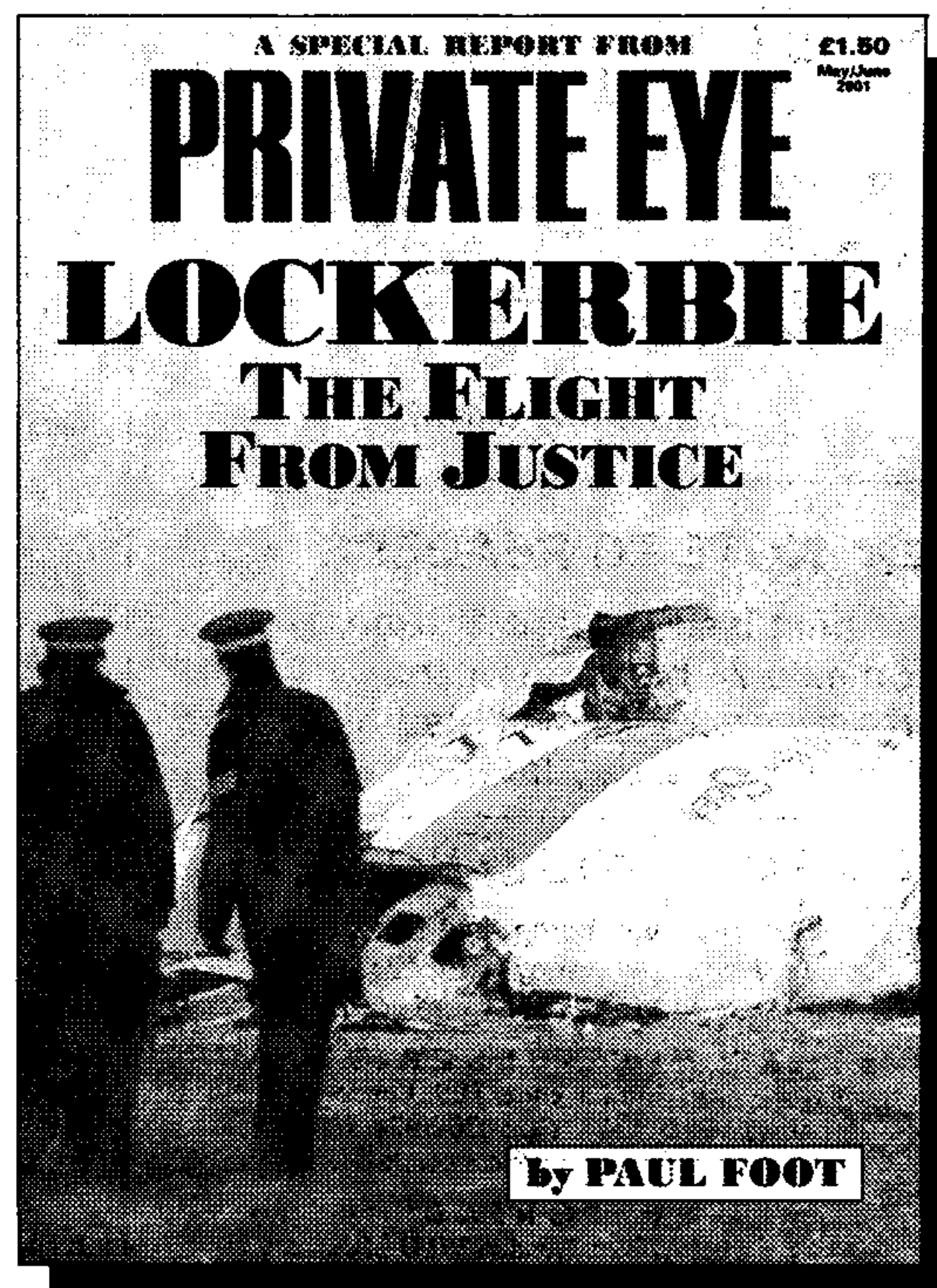
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"Blair's way ahead"

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CONSUMER PRESS



ELECTION UPDATE

WORKERS at North Tees Hospital were excited last week when an electioneering Tony Blair was due to pay a visit.

Miraculously, just an hour before the prime minister arrived, a consignment of carp was delivered to adorn the concrete pond just in front of reception.

Twenty minutes after Blair had left the Cleveland hospital, however, the van returned and took the rented fish away. Yes, this election campaign is full of carp, all right.

EARLIER this year Tony Blair visited the Bemerton estate in Islington, a district of the capital close to his heart, for a photo opportunity to flag up "new" Labour's commitment to cleaning up rundown housing estates and its promise to introduce "zero tolerance of yob culture".

The sound of local youths breaking into and stealing cars for joyriding is a nightly occurrence for residents of nearby Gifford Street, but at the start of May, two months after Blair's spinning visit, yobs were setting fire to vehicles on the road for four hours on two consecutive nights.

Residents rang the police repeatedly only to be told they did not have the resources to intervene. When one resident, whose company is based in Gifford Street, took the firm's CCTV footage of the offenders to the police station, this was ignored too. There is hope, however, that the authorities will eventually sit up and take note. Gifford Street is the home address of one Chris Smith, MP.

AND they're off. The announcement of a 7 June election saw William Hague sprinting from the blocks unveiling a new campaign the very next morning. At least the Tories have their advertising sorted... Well, no actually.

The sudden raft of posters right at the beginning of campaigning is not down to political acuity or indeed the brilliance of the Tories' troubled agency, Yellow M, but rather a piece of foresight gone wrong.

Poster sites have to be booked many months in advance, and the Tories had block-booked their space for early May, presuming this would mark the big run-in. But foot and mouth's untimely intervention meant they suddenly had a lot of unwanted sites on their hands – so posters adorned with such subtleties as "Violent crime is rising" were hastily thrown together. Up in Edinburgh, Scottish Tories organised a similar flying start, except that the vicious broadside they unveiled was an ad for Tesco, the curtain having been placed incorrectly. Small crowds applauded politely.

AT THE behest of Tony Blair Millbank parachuted former Tory MP and Conservative central office spin doctor Shaun Woodward into one of Labour's safest seats, St Helens South, last weekend. Labour party officials deny claims by local Unison officials that the selection meeting within days of MP Gerry Bermingham's decision to "spend more time with his family" was a "stitch-up". The facts suggest otherwise...

The Dear Leader was adamant Woodward should be found a safe seat following his defection (and his refusal to stand again in the Witney seat he had won as a Tory).

Blair also wanted to prove that "new" Labour, as the natural party of government, could also be the natural home for people such as, er, Shaun Woodward (married to a Sainsbury's heiress, etc) rather than just a home for time-serving councillors, dreary trade unionists and smelly-socked socialists.

Because the general election had been called, Labour's NEC was able to exercise special powers over drawing up the candidates' shortlist in St Helens

The joke goes on...

- *The Vicar's Five Pledges for St Albion's 18*
- *Let's go Biggs on it: Hackwatch on the Sun 7*
- *Forget Lib-Lab... it's the Lab-Lobby Pact 8*
- *A pensions bombshell and the Tales of Hoffman 26*
- *Slicker sounds a Shephard's warning 28*
- *And 'Lockerbie: The Flight from Justice', a Private Eye special report by Paul Foot, is still on sale at news-stands*

South. Sitting MP Bermingham had discussed the timetable for his last minute resignation with party managers but not with his local party. A by-election panel was hastily convened and a shortlist of candidates was announced on the morning of the hustings meeting, which included, surprise, surprise, the name, "Shaun Woodward".

This was all the more surprising since Woodward had declared that he had only visited St Helens once before – and that was on the previous Wednesday. But he was at pains to stress that he had visited the north-west "when employed as a researcher for *That's Life!*" But the shortlist was more significant for its omissions. No local candidate was included, and the leader of St Helens council, Marie Rimmer – a favourite to succeed – was deliberately kept off it, as was another prominent leftwinger from outside the area.

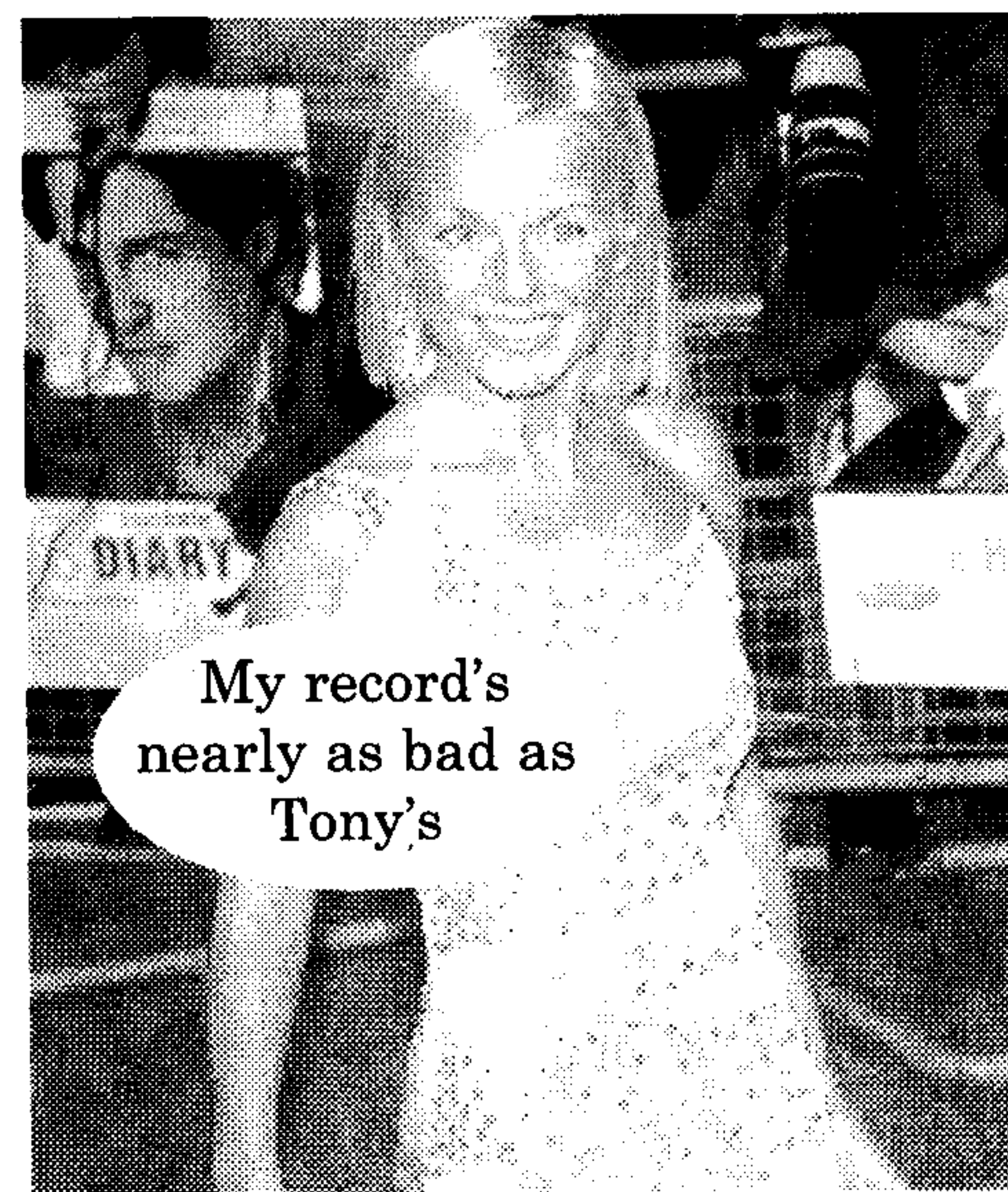
SO how did Shaun Woodward – country pile in Oxfordshire; extremely agreeable London townhouse, etc – convince the solid working class folk of St Helens he was the best person for the job? An answer may be gleaned from a letter in the *Daily Telegraph* from one Stephen Hayward on 23 December 1999.

"Sir – As a Conservative mayor of Witney, may I assist your correspondents with some answers to their queries?"

"During his speech to the Witney Conservative Association final selection meeting, and following a question and answer session we were led to believe certain facts: Shaun approved of fox hunting; would support the reintroduction of capital punishment; would support the existing ban on homosexuals in the armed services; he was a mild 'Euro-sceptic' and supported the 'wait and see' policy of John Major. Shaun was a loyal 'True Blue' Conservative and would be an excellent constituency MP. On this basis he was selected."

And on this basis, all Shaun had to do was to reverse most of the above. For "new" Labour Shaun is of course anti-fox hunting; against the reintroduction of capital punishment and an opponent of the existing ban on homosexuals in the armed forces. He remains a mild "Euro-sceptic" and supports the "wait and see" policy of Tony Blair. He is a loyal, er, Labour man and will be an excellent constituency MP...

GERI BACKS LABOUR



STREET OF SHAME

JUST FANCY THAT!

"THERE was a rumour running around News Corp after Murdoch's marriage to Deng that they were trying for a baby, a tiny dauphin through whom Wendi could rule as regent in the event of her husband's death. A Murdoch-Deng child would certainly leave the other children feeling vulnerable; but it is a rumour that has lost its legs."

— Matthew Lynn, *The Scotsman*, 12 March 2001

SUN readers may have been rather puzzled in the past month by the paper's sudden obsession with the joys of elderly paternity.

On 13 April, there was a long, gushing piece about David Jason and his new daughter, which sought to disprove suggestions in other papers that at the age of 61 Del Boy was perhaps a bit old for fatherhood.

On 21 April, *Sun* hackette Briony Warden reported joyfully that "Eric Clapton will be joining a growing club when his new child is born – older celebrity dads". Other oldies who had proved that they were "not firing blanks yet" included Clint Eastwood, Jack Nicholson, Bill Wyman and Mick Jagger. The upbeat message was neatly summarised in the headline: "CLAPPED OUT? NOT THIS LOT!"

Apparently feeling that she hadn't exhausted this fertile subject, Warden wrote another 1,000-word feature three days later celebrating "the hottest new celebrity club – the Antique Dads". This time the list of "golden oldie" fathers included Phil Collins, David Bowie, Michael Douglas and *Star Trek* star James "Scotty" Doohan who recently fathered a child at the age of 80. Once again, the *Sun* couldn't contain its admiration for these "superstuds". The 70-year-old Clint Eastwood was quoted approvingly: "Age has never been an issue. You're as old as you feel."

Lo and behold! Last week News Corp confirmed that another 70-year-old superstar, Rupert Murdoch, is to join the old dads' club. He had apparently broken the news to close associates "over the past few weeks". Might these associates by any chance include *Sun* editor David Yelland?

HOW very noble of the *Daily Telegraph* to give its competitors such a sporting chance to make its brand new venture – a daily sports supplement – one of the year's dampest squibs.

Having hauled in its most venerable sports hacks for a long lunch of undisclosed purpose, the *Telegraph* announced that as of Monday 14 May its crack sports team would be churning out a separate sports supplement every day in an attempt to trounce not just the *Times*, but also those upstarts at the *Guardian* whose editor had had the nerve to suggest that his sports coverage wasn't bad either.

A fortnight before the launch, notices went up around the *Telegraph* announcing the exclusive new handout. At the same time, some bright spark rang the *Press Gazette* – read by all editors everywhere – to tell the world the momentous news. Lo and behold, the *Times* of Saturday 5 May arrived emblazoned with a banner announcing the launch of *Sports Daily*, "Britain's first daily sports supplement", on 8 May.

The giggles from Wapping could be heard all over London. Cue abject panic at the *Telegraph*, which brought its launch forward to the same day, an exercise in damage limitation that left staff nonplussed at being hauled in on a bank holiday for a rushed redesign.

ONE of the dangers of inviting an outsider to write for your rag is that he might bring his own, somewhat incompatible opinions with him.

ITV sports commentator Peter Drury's honest observation in the *Indie* on 4 May – that there's nothing so "banal" or "offensive" in sports reporting as the "thoughtlessly-spouted, national stereotype" – may have heartened some readers. But not lion-hearted Derek Pringle, who just inches below on the same page was opining that "revenge has long been embedded in Pakistan's culture". The lack of communication out in the middle really is appalling.

WHEN Rebekah Wade took over the *News of the Screws* one of her first acts was to fire the combative Old Labour columnist Richard Stott and replace him with Blairite toady Sion Simon. Now Wade's new rival at the *Sunday Mirror*, Tina Weaver, has hired Stott.

Weaver's fondness for the old curmudgeon is understandable: her career blossomed under his editorship at the *People* and *Today*. But some of Stott's friends are surprised that he has accepted the offer, given that Weaver's editor-in-chief is none other than Piers "Morgan" Moron.

Stott, a former long-serving editor of the *Daily Mirror*, has never hidden his contempt for his successors. In scathing articles for the *Times* and the *British Journalism Review* two years ago, he accused Morgan's *Mirror* of betraying its readers – thus provoking a furious riposte from Moron, who dismissed Stott as an embittered old failure.

Fans of Stott's trenchant views now wonder if the acceptance of the Morgan shilling will mean an end to his fearless and well-reasoned thoughts on this subject.

IF YOU have downsized past the point of no return, how do you fill the pages of your newspaper? Simple: plagiarise from other titles in the same group.

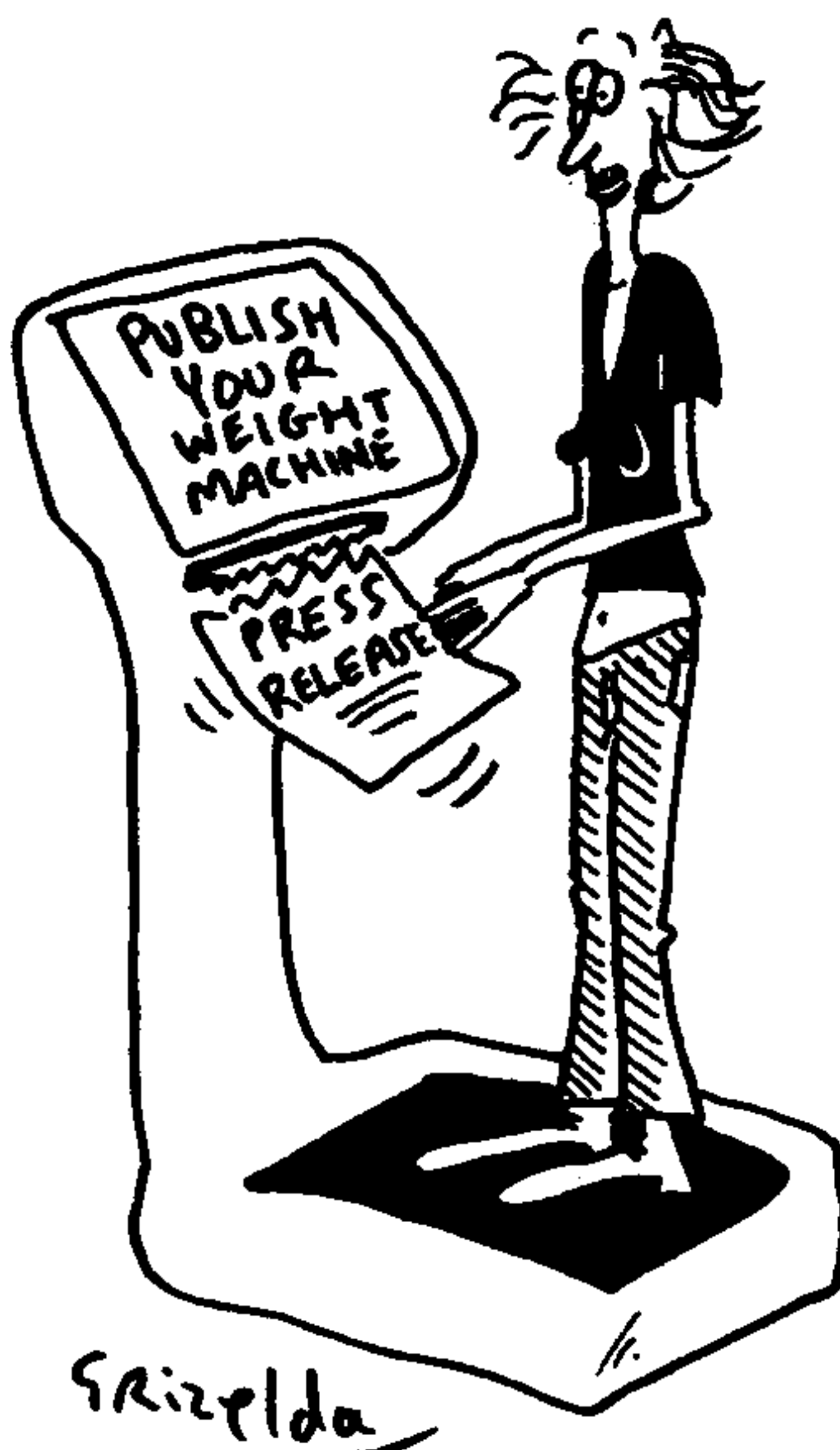
Word has gone out that the newspapers in Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill's mighty media empire – the ailing *Scotsman*, *Scotland on Sunday* and *Sunday Business* – are all free to recycle one another's copy.

"Brillo Pad" is leading by example: one of his long screeds in *Scotland on Sunday* last month was reprinted in its entirety by the *Hootsmon* the following day. In it, the sage of the Cote D'Azur wrote glowingly of the virtues of job insecurity, arguing that "countries that fire the most also hire the most". Though this raised a few eyebrows among the few remaining staff at the *Scotsman* (where, despite mass sackings, there is still a strict recruitment freeze), no doubt it afforded great comfort to the 3,000 Motorola workers who lost their jobs shortly afterwards.

But might Neill himself soon be heading for the Job Centre? The recent departures of his £250,000-a-year "editorial adviser" Sue Douglas and assistant managing director Stephen Tait have revived a rumour that the Barclay twins may sell their Scottish papers to Trinity Mirror, owner of the *Daily Record* and *Sunday Mail*.

When the story first surfaced last month (in Trinity Mirror's *Daily Record*), Brillo reacted in typically temperate style with a signed article on the *Scotsman*'s front page, headed "LIES, DAMNED LIES AND THE DAILY RECORD". The *Hootsmon*, he declared, was not for sale: "I can be categorical about that because it is the truth. The *Record* would have found that out if they had bothered to call me."

But would the Barclays necessarily tell Neill if they were planning to offload Press Holdings? Is it possible that he might be "out of the loop", as some Edinburgh sources suspect, and that negotiations are being conducted discreetly and directly between Aidan Barclay and Sir Angus Grossart, Scotland's biggest merchant banker, who also happens to be chairman of the *Daily Record*?



THE *Daily Mail* is meeting the challenge of Dirty Desmond's celeb-fixated *Express* by upping its own entertainment content – thus increasing the likelihood that Nigel Dempster's daily page of minor royals and fame-free aristocrats will be culled to make way for a Bizarre-style column.

To avoid this terrible fate poor Humpty Dumpster is valiantly seeking out showbiz scoops.

"Hollywood's liberal establishment is about to take its first swipe at the White House's new incumbent," he revealed excitedly last month. "That's *My Bush*, a *Simpsons*-style cartoon series that portrays George Dubya as somewhat less than competent, was turned down by ABC, but is soon to be aired by the cable network Comedy Central."

Nigel's "source" for this was in fact an old American article; unfortunately he forgot to check whether it was still current, and managed to misread it anyway. The first episode of *That's My Bush!* had been broadcast on 4 April, a full 11 days before Humpty announced that it was "soon to be aired" (as they say in Kensington). And the show features live actors, not cartoons.

Meanwhile, Dumpster's curious obsession with comely French beauty Laetitia Casta continues. *Eye* readers will recall that earlier this year he lifted part of a *Variety* review of Casta's film debut, disguising the reviewer's comments as "quotes" from two separate sources. Now he's at it again, regaling readers on 7 May with the news that "model Laetitia Casta is to be found in New York. Says a source partying the other day with the Corsican brunette who became the official Marianne, face of France: 'The last time I saw her she was leaving with a rather scruffy guy to his apartment in Greenwich Village...'"

Needless to say Dumpster had simply lifted the story from the "Page Six" section of the *New York Post*'s website, changing the words around to make it look as if he had an informant rather than a mere Internet browser. While some people have imaginary friends, Nigel has imaginary "sources". How much longer before editor Paul Dacre decides to put the wretched hack out of his misery?

IT NOW seems that *Mirror* editor Piers Morgan, the Slickers and their cronies will escape prosecution and, as predicted in the last *Eye*, that the Department of Timidity & Inaction report on their antics will remain forever secret.

The inside word from the DTI is that although the inspectors are scathing about Moron's conduct, they shy away from recommending a tricky and complex criminal trial.

According to *Sunday Business*, "Tony Blair's spokesman, Alastair Campbell, is understood to have assured Morgan there will be no prosecutions." Very kind of Downing Street to put Piers out of his misery in time for the election campaign. But how would Campbell know the outcome of a supposedly independent inquiry ahead of its official conclusion, and before it even went off to the appropriate minister, Stephen Byers?

READERS may recall the letter from Nick Young (*Eye* 1025) complaining about our article in *Eye* 1024 concerning the identification of a headless corpse in the Ukraine.

It gives us no pleasure to point out that DNA tests have indeed identified the victim as Georgy Gongadze, the journalist whose death is believed to involve President Kuchma's regime. Thus the *Eye* was not "in error" to report it as such.

THE unique selling point of *Real* magazine, launched last month with a £10m advertising campaign and a circulation target of 900,000, is that it eschews celebrity chit-chat, focusing instead on the everyday problems and passions of ordinary people – “Living With a Workaholic”, “Are You Heading For an Affair?” and, er, “Could You Love a Man Who Waxes His Buttocks?”

But how real is it? The cover story a couple of weeks ago, in which one Emma Brown described “My 10 years in a Sexless Marriage”, was in fact written by Bev Hadgraft, editor of downmarket Australian mag *That's Life*. Hadgraft is an old friend of *Real*'s editor, Janice Turner, and when Janice rang pleading for copy Bev was happy to oblige. Following her “sexless marriage” masterpiece, she has now supplied Turner with a buffer-stock of other pieces – on an illegal immigrant boyfriend who gave her herpes, her exploration of Tantric sex, her Ugandan adventures with an overweight lover, and so on. These are to be passed off as true-life stories by ordinary women, each under a different name.

As Janice Turner told the *Guardian* at the time of her launch last month: “I have always passionately believed that real people are more interesting...” Indeed so: even if many of these real people turn out to be one prolific hackette in Sydney.

HOW JOURNALISM WORKS

“To: OBSERVER

Subject: c***s

SWEARING. Frightful lot of swearing going on in the paper nowadays, and an alarming number of cunts in the Sports Pages, so to speak. While we're obviously a grown-up paper – and I don't want to sound like the Bishop of Dundee – do keep an eye and please see me if there is any level of doubt. Roger.”

Memo from editor Roger Alton to all *Observer* hacks.

LOTTERY NEWS

LOTTERY operator Camelot is so desperate to boost its ailing lottery extra game it took the enormous gamble of guaranteeing a £20m jackpot on Saturday 12 May – almost 10 times the sum usually spent on the game.

Fortunately for Camelot, no one won the £14m lottery extra jackpot the previous Wednesday. If they had, the good causes would have lost £18m. In the event lottery extra sales for the Saturday draw reached an all time high, but this was still less than £3.6m, meaning Camelot paid out more than five times the amount they collected, and more than £2m was lost to the good causes.

The national lottery commission sanctioned Camelot's madcap economics in an attempt to arouse interest in a game which has proved a massive flop – sales were expected to be in the order of £12m a week, but have so far usually been less than £3m. This is because it only makes sense to buy a lottery extra ticket when there is a rollover. Most of the time a punter can buy a normal ticket for the same stake and the same odds, with a bigger jackpot and many other prizes to boot, and the only punters daft enough to throw money away on the lottery extra are, er, Camelot and the commissioners.



“Can Julie come out for sex?”

HACKWATCH

Biggs Might Fly

THE newspaper silly season has started early this year. And the biggest silly is David Yelland of the *Sun*, who proved to be wildly out of touch with his readers by launching a gimmicky “populist” campaign involving Ronald Biggs – a man whose famous crime was committed before most *Sun* readers were born.

The ludicrous farrago, which cost News International £500,000, began with a huge front-page headline on Thursday 3 May: “WORLD EXCLUSIVE: BIGGS ON WAY BACK.”

Unwittingly, however, the paper's coverage served only to confirm what ancient history this was. Mike Sullivan, the *Sun*'s crime editor, admitted to feeling “a twinge of sadness” for Biggs's rosy vision of Britain in the early 1960s: “It's almost as if he is stuck in a time-warp.”

Another member of the *Sun*'s vast reporting team, Nick Parker, noted that the great train robbery occurred “in the far-off era when Harold Macmillan was prime minister and the Searchers topped the hit parade”. An editorial on page 9 began with yet another reminder: “When Ronnie Biggs went over the wall at Wandsworth 35 years ago it was a very different England...”

Curiously, despite filling six pages with similar guff, the *Sun* neglected to give its opinion on the crucial question of whether he should go back to jail. The readers, apparently, would decide: “Lock him up or set Biggs free?”

The answer arrived the next day. Despite the *Sun*'s best efforts to portray its mate “Ronnie” as a bizarre combination of Robin Hood-style folk hero and a sad, sick, harmless old codger who wanted nothing more than a vindaloo and a pint of bitter down Margate way, only just over half the callers to the “You the Jury” hotline thought his wish should be granted. (The paper valiantly described this as “a sizeable 57 percent”.)

Elsewhere, virtually every TV and radio phone-in poll showed massive hostility to the *Sun*'s stunt. The consensus was that the old lag wanted to come home only because he was ill and skint, and needed to take advantage of the NHS at the expense of tax-paying, law-abiding citizens who hadn't spent the past three decades basking in Rio, screwing Copacabana beach girls and periodically granting interviews to cheque-wielding British hacks whenever funds ran low.

Even the *Sun* was obliged to admit that its office had been “bombarded with emails and phone calls” from angry readers arguing that he should be left to rot in Brazil. But it was too late to abort the mission now: the “private *Sun* plane” had already left for Rio. In an editorial on 5 May, the paper reversed its usual ferocious hostility to Robin Cook after the foreign secretary intervened to speed up the Biggs/*Sun* passport application in Brazil. “We are very grateful,” it simpered. “Thank you, Robin... we can see why Tony Blair has decided NOT to move you after the election. When the chips are down, Cookie delivers... and he doesn't care about the flak either.”

Despite the manifest unpopularity of its Biggs stunt, the *Sun* became ever more self-congratulatory in the hope of persuading gullible readers that it had pulled off “one of the biggest news coups in the history of newspapers”. Its main story on Saturday 5 May was dominated by a big photo of *Sun* hacks Simon Hughes and Mike Sullivan aboard the jet “which will bring Ronnie home”. The front page of 7 May showed Biggs “flanked at Rio airport last night by the *Sun*'s Simon Hughes and John Askill”. There were more pictures of Hughes, Sullivan and Askill inside, plus a special feature on “the ace *Sun* team” in Brazil: “Mike Sullivan, 37, a father of one... Reporter John Askill, 54, a father of two and *Sun* man for 24 years... photographer Harry Page, 44, a father of two...” Et cetera. The details about their children were, presumably, for the benefit of future biographers.

For, as an editorial boasted, “The *Sun*'s Boys in Brazil deserve their place in Fleet Street folklore. Their names will forever shine. This is the stuff of which legends are made.” The next day, after Biggs's arrival in Britain, another editorial modestly described the *Sun* as “the greatest newspaper in the world”.

By Wednesday 9 May the paper's grip on reality, always weak at the best of times, had gone altogether. Showbiz editor Dominic Mohan filled the whole of page 7 with a “story” claiming that Hollywood moguls were battling for the rights to make a film

about the scoop. “Some of showbiz's biggest names could play *Sun* reporters,” he raved. Tommy Lee Jones was the favourite for the part of “gritty, rugged crime editor Mike Sullivan”; Michael Douglas might play reporter John Askill; Harrison Ford would be the obvious choice to portray Graham Dudman, the *Sun*'s head of news. Meanwhile, an editorial congratulated Robin Cook on becoming president of the Party of European Socialists: “Sounds good to us, Robin. Well done that man and well-deserved...”

Two questions remain about the *Sun*'s “triumph”. As crime editor Mike Sullivan pointed out on 3 May, Biggs recently suffered a stroke which “has robbed him of his speech”: he can communicate only by scribbling on a notepad. Yet according to Simon Hughes's tear-jerking account of the prodigal's return, Biggs broke into a chorus of “The White Cliffs of Dover” as the English coastline came into view and then sang “The Green Green Grass of Home”. Shome mishtake, shurely?

The other question is how the lavish payments to Biggs's family, and to chums such as train robber Bruce Reynolds, can be reconciled with the press complaints commission's ban on paying criminals or their “associates” (including friends, neighbours and relations). Although the PCC's “code of practice committee” has started an investigation, the *Sun* seems remarkably confident that it will be vindicated. By happy coincidence, the chairman of the code of practice committee is Les Hinton – executive chairman of News International, owners of the *Sun*.

● **PREDICTABLY** the *Daily Mirror*'s Piers Moron seized the chance to take a pot at the *Sun*'s love affair with Biggs: on this, at least, the *Mirror* certainly seemed more in tune with public sentiment. But Moron managed to get it badly wrong with his own hysterical campaign demanding that Camelot hand over £3m to Kay and Martyn Tott, who had lost a winning lottery ticket and failed to make their claim within the 30 days laid down in the rules.

A *Mirror* readers' poll showed a narrow majority urging Camelot to pay: hardly surprising, given the paper's one-sided editorial approach. But, once again, phone-in polls and TV and radio revealed a hefty majority backing Camelot rather than the Totts, despite attempts by Moron and Max Clifford to present them as victims of the biggest miscarriage of justice since the Birmingham Six.

Then, just as the *Mirror* was running out of steam, culture secretary Chris Smith publicly supported the Totts, and Alastair Campbell informed hacks that the prime minister was also backing the *Mirror*'s campaign – even though the government's own lottery commission had told Camelot it would be breaking the rules if it paid up. As with the intervention by foreign secretary Robin “Cookie” on behalf of the *Sun*, might this sudden eagerness by ministers to help the tabloids by any chance be related to the proximity of a general election? If so, “new” Labour had clearly not bothered to consult its famous focus groups.

YELLAND GIVES HIMSELF UP



I've got a feeling my time in the *Sun* is almost over



THE LOBBY PARTY

THE election campaign will make the Labour party even more emphatically the Lobby party as "new" Labour's commanding lead in the polls attracts yet more corporate hired guns.

Colin Byrne, formerly Labour's information chief and deputy to Peter Mandelson, left the party to work for lobbyist Shandwick. Now Shandwick's chief executive, during the election he will return to the party to advise Lord Hollick, who is leading Labour's "Business relations" unit.

Byrne told the *Eye* his "clients are comfortable" with his party post. Indeed, they already include a number of firms who have cuddled up to "new" Labour, either through donating to the party, sponsoring Labour events or backing the dome. They include dome-backers Manpower plc Tesco and the Corporation of London; and Labour funders Vivendi (which funds the party through its rail subsidiary Connex and funds the New Local Government Network through its waste subsidiary Onyx) and PriceWaterhouseCoopers (which gave the party £3,958 worth of "services" in March).

Nestlé, which funded a fringe meeting attended by Cherie Blair at the last Labour conference, and Cherie's Matrix Chambers, are also Shandwick clients. Other clients who will be "comfortable" with Byrne's place at the heart of the Labour campaign include two arms firms – TI Group and Northrop Grumman; Carillion, the company formerly known as Tarmac which wants to run hospitals under Labour; and LINC, the consortium currently bidding for the third, unallocated slice of the Tube privatisation, the "Sub Surface Lines".

Byrne told the *Eye* that as his election work for Labour "does not impact on policy" there was no conflict of interest. He explained that "business was a target audience", and as the corporate sector was a constituency like any other – like women, or ethnic minorities, for example – his election work was justified.

One of Labour's newest recruits, Ceri Evans, is also a lobbyist. The former adviser to Hague and Steve Norris is managing director for "public affairs" (or lobbying) at Golin Harris Ludgate. His move to Labour has been portrayed as a troubled Tory discovering the Blairite truth. However, the register of "Professional Political Consultants" suggests another possible motive.

Ludgate's roster of lobbying clients shrank from 40 to 17 between May and November 2000. Unlike other lobbying firms, Ludgate is desperately short of "new" Labour account handlers. The only politically connected staff at Ludgate are Tories like Evans, and Alex Challoner, a member of the executive of the Tory Reform Group who also worked on Steve Norris's mayoral campaign.

Ludgate even advertises for business by highlighting Evans' background as "Chief of Staff and Campaign Director for Steve Norris in his London Mayoral Campaign". Ludgate has been advertising furiously in the Labour-oriented *New Statesman*, right on the editorial page, for every week since Evans made the jump to Labour.

The lobbying industry's biggest gain from Labour looks set to happen after the election. Phil Wilson, once Blair's trusted lieutenant in Sedgefield, is currently a lobbyist for Brunswick Public Relations. Brunswick values its links with Labour – it pays money into party coffers and sent one of its staff on "secondment" to the treasury to work on financial reform. Wilson hopes to become a deputy political secretary, working for Blair.

Brunswick already represents a number of firms close to the party, including Severn Trent, a private water firm which already donates to the party, and Celsis International, one of Labour donor Chris Evans' firms. Brunswick also represents other companies who have an intense interest in good relations with the next government, including drug and GM giant AstraZeneca; De La Rue plc (part of

Do you know
you haven't got
any policies?

You
hum it and I'll
pick it up

the Camelot consortium); cluster bomb maker Hunting plc; Powergen; private train firm FirstGroup; Imperial Tobacco; Lex (which is bidding for a number of military privatisations); Prudential; and Bank of Scotland – the latter two both heavily involved in PFI sell-offs.

DURING a recent speech to the Social Market Foundation, leading Blairite trade and industry minister Stephen Byers stunned his audience by audaciously reaching out to pinch yet more traditional Tory clothing.

"New Labour," croaked the Byers Dalek, should be the party of "enterprise and opportunity". Furthermore the party needed to quicken the "pace of its modernising reforms". The likely future education secretary went on to outline his vision of "One Nation Socialism", hilariously forgetting that this neat phrase was once coined by the National Socialist party in Germany (proprietor: A. Hitler).

This display of Blairite modernity brought a smile to a prominent but now retired member of the Transport and General Workers' Union, who recalled being lampooned by a young and very hairy "Steve Byers" in the mid-1970s when the latter enjoyed a close relationship with the revolutionary International Socialists. Byers would then accuse the former secretary of the South East Trade Council of being a "rightwinger". But no more vociferously than when the young legal student teamed up with his mate Jim Fitzpatrick, now also a Blairite Labour MP, on the often violent Grunwick picket line in the mid-70s.

The anti-union proprietor of the Grunwick plant was one George Ward, a prominent local Tory businessman, who believed passionately in, er, "enterprise and opportunity".

IN the piece in the last *Eye* about Jeffrey Archer's lunch at White's club, his generous host was not, of course, former *Sunday Times* political reporter the late Gordon Greig, but Geordie Greig, former *Sunday Times* literary editor and current editor of *Tatler*.

Silly mistake. Sorry.



"You'll have to do better than 6p off petrol"

RETIRING Labour MP Tony Benn has been speaking up and down the country for the few Old Labourites to survive the Dear Leader's cull. After one such meeting, held in Winchester, the Bennattollah was approached by a woman of a certain age.

"That was a marvellous speech," the old biddy boomed. Upon closer examination the Benn admirer turned out to be none other than Dame Elaine Kellett Bowman, the high decibel former Tory MP for Chester.

'Backbiter'

Labour to right off student debts of new teachers

LONDON (Reuters) - The Labour government said it would right off the debts of college students

BT Internet

COURT CIRCULAR

THE election date has provided Buckingham Palace with one or two headaches.

On 8 June, when the Queen is expected to summon her new bleary-eyed PM and give him the seals of office, Brenda was supposed to be visiting the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards on the Nato tank ranges at Hohn in Germany. At a meeting between Brenda and her senior aides following Tony Blair's announcement, one flunkey rashly suggested that Prince Charles could see in the new prime minister if Her Maj were in Germany. This rash advice was dismissed with a withering stare by Brenda: she won't even let her eldest son lay her Cenotaph wreath, let alone appoint the prime minister.

Trying to find a middle way Sir Robin Janvrin, Brenda's private secretary, phoned the MoD and simply rescheduled the Hohn trip. But less simple was the Queen's state visit to Norway on 30 May.

While Britain spends a month without a government, the Queen, as head of state, is supposed to run the show and there was some debate as to whether she could leave the country for three days. No one could recall a precedent; and in the end it was decided that the visit could go ahead, with Charles required to stay in the UK – as "the royal John Prescott", a senior aide was heard to mutter.

Brenda, no doubt looking forward to gossiping over the herrings with her Norwegian cousins, expressed relief that at least she wouldn't have Robin and Gaynor Cook dogging her steps, as no government means no foreign secretary tagging along with the royal party. Instead, she will have to rely on the diplomatic tact and advice of, er, Prince Philip.

Royal Ascot is also proving problematic since Blair wants a state opening of parliament on Ladies Day. The solution currently being worked on by the palace is to start the ceremony half-an-hour early at 11am which – given a swift helicopter and quick change – could enable Brenda to get to Ascot in time for the carriage procession. Ascot, ever-deferential, has privately offered to delay the first race to 2.45pm to help the royal progress.

Tough being head of state, isn't it?

LEGAL NEWS

MORE on Lindis Percy, 59, the one woman crime-wave who is terrorising US servicemen with her peaceful protests at US military bases in Britain against Dubya's Star Wars World™ "idea".

As readers will recall (see *Eyes* 1025 & 1027), Ms Percy was arrested and charged with "racial harassment" after the Starwars Spangled Banner she had written on met with the highway she was also charged with obstructing outside the Menwith Hill tracking station in North Yorkshire.

After "not guilty" verdicts at Harrogate magistrates' court, a similar "racially aggravated" charge (following a separate incident at Feltwell in Norfolk and due to be heard at Fakenham magistrates' court), has been discontinued by the crown prosecution service. It is to be replaced by charges for both "abusive or insulting behaviour" – again concerning her apparent disregard for those sensitive souls who must watch their flag being waved at them with writing on – and another for "obstruction of the highway".

MAN IN THE EYE

PROFESSOR
ROY ANDERSON

IF Tony Blair has an ounce of gratitude, he will certainly wish to reward Professor Roy Anderson of Imperial College, London.

It was Prof Anderson who created the computer model used by MAFF which predicted that the number of foot-and-mouth cases would fall to zero on 7 June — thus allowing the PM to call an election for that very day and to boast that his slaughter policy has been triumphantly vindicated.

To achieve this desirable result, of course, a certain amount of statistical jiggery-pokery was necessary. Dr Paul

Kitching of the Pirbright Animal Institute told *Channel 4 News* that the new projections were almost worthless; he also pointed out how conveniently they had been adjusted when the favoured election date was moved from May to June.

But the government had a perfect defence to the charge of fiddling the figures: its methods had been devised by the independent expert Professor Anderson, a man of impeccable reputation. It was a point stressed by Blair's chief scientific adviser, Professor David King, at a press conference on 3 May.

Had Fleet Street's hacks bothered to make a few inquiries, they might have learned some interesting facts about this paragon. Before taking up his post at Imperial College a year ago, Roy Anderson was Linacre Professor of Zoology at Oxford University. His defection was described by the *Guardian* at the time as a tremendous coup for London University and a "severe blow" to Oxford. In truth, however, he had little choice but to leave the dreaming spires.

The trouble began in January last year, when Anderson was suspended on full pay while the university authorities investigated complaints filed by his colleague Dr Sunetra Gupta — whom he had accused, publicly and falsely, of gaining her post at Oxford by sleeping with another professor in the zoology department. Dr Karen Day, a member of the panel which appointed Dr Gupta, also complained of his "offensive and intimidatory" behaviour.

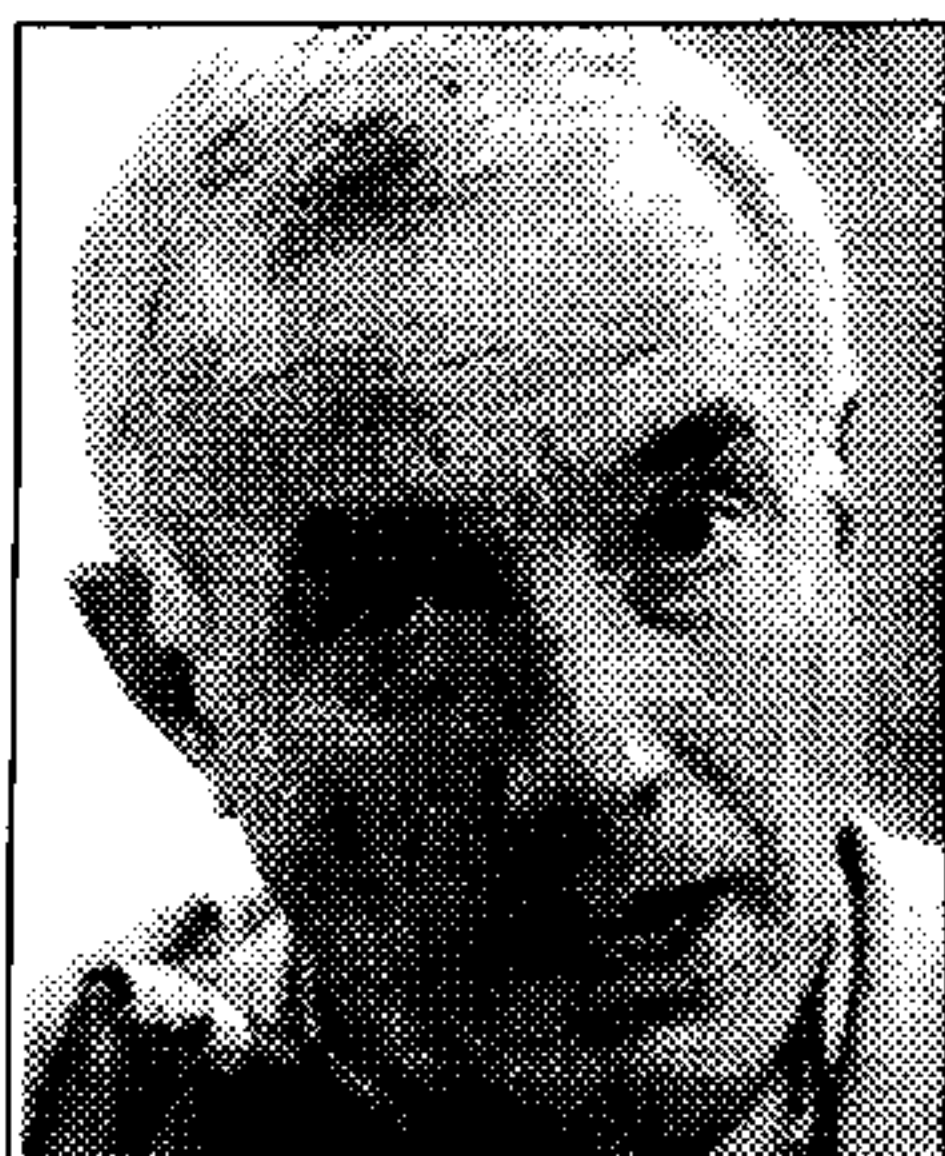
Anderson was reinstated two months later after agreeing to apologise in writing to those concerned. This failed to satisfy Dr Gupta, who continued to press for a public retraction. A meeting attended by 26 readers, lecturers and professors in the zoology department passed a unanimous vote of no confidence in Professor Anderson.

Meanwhile, an inquiry by the university into the research centre in the zoology department criticised his "autocratic" management style: conditions at the centre were "intolerable" and divisions ran "very deep". And a separate financial audit found that he hadn't disclosed to either the university or to the Wellcome Trust, which largely financed the research centre, that he was a director and shareholder of International Biomedical and Health Sciences Consortium, a private consultancy firm which had close financial links with the centre.

"There was a degree of naivety on his part," a Wellcome spokesman said. "He should have been aware of the procedures to be followed. The research centre was also receiving commercial grants which were not declared, in breach of the trust's regulations."

On 9 May 2000, Anderson resigned his Oxford post and announced that he was taking up a chair at Imperial College. A month later, he finally gave Dr Gupta the formal apology she wanted, admitting that there had been "no foundation in truth whatsoever" in his comments. He paid her legal costs plus damages of £1,000, which she donated to Save the Children. As she told the *Daily Telegraph* last June: "I felt nobody should be allowed to get away with this and remain in a position where they are making judgements about people's lives... I felt there was no other choice, no other way to protect myself or other people."

Less than a year later Prof Anderson is now installed in Imperial splendour in London, and "making judgements" which enable the government to maintain that its foot-and-mouth policy has been an unqualified success. Can a knighthood be far behind?



NOOKS and CORNERS

LIKE the countryside, Britain's seaside is having a bad time too. Many resorts are in long term decline and their only hope seems to be to make the most of their particular characters — which, to a great extent, is determined by architecture.

Take Hastings. Despite the electrification of the railway from Charing Cross, the ancient port and resort has grave economic problems. But it also has some wonderful medieval, Regency and Victorian buildings. The borough council seems to recognise this and has engaged in various regeneration with acronyms like CAPS and HERS organised with English Heritage and the heritage lottery fund, setting up the Hastings Regeneration Partnership.

All very fine. Yet now the council is feebly acquiescing in the demolition of the Marlborough Hotel in Warrior Square for the most dubious and disturbing reasons.

Hastings borough council's own local plan states that "Warrior Square is one of the most important features of urban form along the seafront. It provides a unique contrast to the continuous facade of buildings facing the sea and in many respects represents both the link and the transition between Hastings and St Leonards."

The Marlborough Hotel consists of a group of houses of the 1850s at the entrance to this formal composition, but they have been disused for more than a decade and are now in poor shape. A few years ago they were taken on by the Chichester Diocesan Housing Association and an SRB (single regeneration budget) grant of £400,000 secured for the "renovation of the Marlborough Hotel" as sheltered housing. Unfortunately the tenders for conversion and extension came in too high, and the property was sold on to the Hyde Housing Corporation.

Whatever its good intentions, this organisation is not interested in reusing historic buildings. On the Pepys Estate in south-east London, it secured government subsidy for demolishing buildings proposed for restoration and now it is trying the same game in Hastings — the SRB grant is being retained to be used to replace real buildings by mediocre neo-Victorian structures.

This betrayal has been challenged by both the Burtons' St Leonards Society and the Old Hastings Preservation Society which argue that, although these important threatened buildings are not listed, they are in a conservation area and that government guidelines indicate that the freehold of such buildings must be put on the open market before demolition should be permitted.

These two societies had hoped to challenge the council's granting of planning permission in the high court but were deterred by possible costs. A shame; for if the rules can be bent to allow the demolition of

historic buildings with a subsidy — of public money — intended for their renovation, nothing is safe.

IT IS often the fate of the pioneer to be superseded, indeed forgotten — and such is the case with London's Mermaid Theatre.

When it opened in 1959 it was the first new theatre to be built in London for 30 years and the first in the City of London for 300. It preceded both the Barbican Theatre in the City and both the National Theatre and the revived Globe on the other side of the Thames.

Nor was the Mermaid conventional; it was something remarkable. It was created within the walls of a brick warehouse gutted in the second world war and, with its projecting stage and single tier of seating, looked back to the roots of the theatre, to the time of Shakespeare and to the ancient Greeks.

And it was a struggle too. The late Sir Bernard Miles "and other poor players of London" took a lease of the Puddle Dock from the City Corporation and then raised the necessary money entirely through public subscription. In its day, the Mermaid was a triumph and a breath of fresh air.

Now all that is forgotten. The romance of the post-war City, full of derelict buildings and bomb-sites, and with the Thames still shabbily, excitingly industrial, has dissolved. The City has reverted to type and every square inch of the Square Mile is exploited and covered with the vulgar, marble-clad or bronzed-glazed new commercial architecture which architects and developers insist is inevitable and which the City's planning committee welcomes.

And so the Mermaid is under threat, as an under-used prime site for development. It is now owned by Blackfriars Developments Ltd, which is applying for planning permission to replace it by an office block with, oh yes, a "performance space" somewhere within — about a quarter of the size of the present theatre.

The Mermaid has been run down for the last decade, allowing it to sink from view; and now, to make sure nobody living or working nearby is sentimental about it, this innovative space has been let on Saturday nights for noisy raves. It is not often I agree with the Revd Chad Varah as he let My Lord Palumbo vulgarise and spoil Wren's St Stephen's Walbrook, but he is right when he writes that "It's a mark of a civilised city to have theatres, opera houses and concert halls. Until Bernard Miles came along there was no theatre in the City of London. Bernard built one and exciting plays were put on at the Mermaid — we should be ashamed to let it be destroyed."

'Piloti'

AD NAUSEAM

SO farewell, then, ET. The most notable thing about BT's latest campaign is not that it's dire (instructions how to prepare for cheap-rate phonecalls, including stretching index fingers and talking a lot — catch "start limbering up") but that it marks the quiet demise of Spielberg's most famous creation.

Like at the end of the movie, BT's mascot for the last two years has mysteriously left the planet, leaving the beleaguered telecoms giant to fend for itself without supernatural assistance and the advertising no better than it was before.

Topped only by Unilever and, of course, "new" Labour (the undisputed kings of corporate communication), BT spends £100m a year on advertising. This is all the more remarkable considering that until deregulation it had no competition to speak of, meaning that for years the message was just "Use the phone".

But the market has changed. The purpose of paying Universal £5m in April 1999 for the rights to use ET for a couple of years was to try to reflect that BT did mobiles, internet and all that other stuff: not just nattering to gran. Why a portly rubber alien was any better equipped to do this than Bob Hoskins remains unclear. But "It's good to talk" was replaced with the not-wholly-dissimilar "Stay in Touch", and ET did reprises from all your favourite scenes as BT slid ever further into debt.



Now, alas, the alien is getting the chop: the time had come to pay Universal another £5m, and those cheeky tykes at trendy St Lukes agency had been begging BT to let them have a stab at a big branding ad for ages. BT didn't have the heart to ditch Abbott Mead Vickers, with the result that both of them are about to produce new TV work in a few weeks' time, one a fortnight after the other. St Lukes is supposed to be working on a *Gladiator*-type affair; AMV may or may not have a goodbye-little-alien number up its sleeve. But two campaigns by competing agencies in a fortnight? It would appear that on top of his eight-day week, Pigling Bland has some work to do in the marketing department.

"Don't ask her about their Kenyan holiday, right"



AME TV

Sam's Game (ITV)

Bob Martin (ITV)

YOU can argue till you're blue in the face about which is TV's greatest soap. Some would contend that *EastEnders* just edges it over *Corrie* due to grittier plotlines and more urban noir. Then again, *Brooky* does have a line in pushing its audience till it can't take no more, and then pushing it a little further. Myself, however, I can't think of a more gripping saga, set over years and containing the whole gamut of human emotion from gut-wrenching tragedy to abject farce, than ITV's quest for a half-decent sitcom.

The latest attempt is *Sam's Game*, where the "sit" was another group of twentysomethings sharing a flat and the "com" was high-priestess of entertain-u-like Davina McCall in her debut as a serious actress. Much in the same way that you don't judge a book by its cover (unless the cover says "Jeffrey Archer"), assessing a sitcom on its first half-hour is notoriously dangerous – characters are being established, running gags are learning to walk. Suffice to say that Ms McCall gives a fair account of herself, bar the occasional "this isn't my day job" moment; stand-up comedian Ed Byrne is mildly amusing in a doddering fool kind of way; and the whole

thing is exactly like *Friends*, right down to the theme music but without the eye candy.

And as with every sitcom ever, the backbone of the humour is regurgitated Restoration farce, including jokes about bodily functions, a dash of slapstick, lashings of dramatic irony and plenty of exiting stage left as someone else enters stage right.

So nothing original, nothing disastrous; it's not cataclysmic bilge but there's no need to try to learn to work the video.

The main reason *Sam's Game* is of interest, in fact, is as the latest example of the Big Name Vehicle fallacy. Somewhere in London Television Centre there's a suit who thinks that because Celeb A can front a Saturday Night dumb-fest, and even (in Davina's case) pull-off the zeitgeisty yooof stuff (*Big Brother*, *Streetmate*), they can

will attest). Celebrity multi-tasking leads at best to half-measures, and at worst to *Lee Evans: So What Now?*, a risible BBC sitcom misfire which after six episodes has contained just one amusing joke: the deep irony of the title.

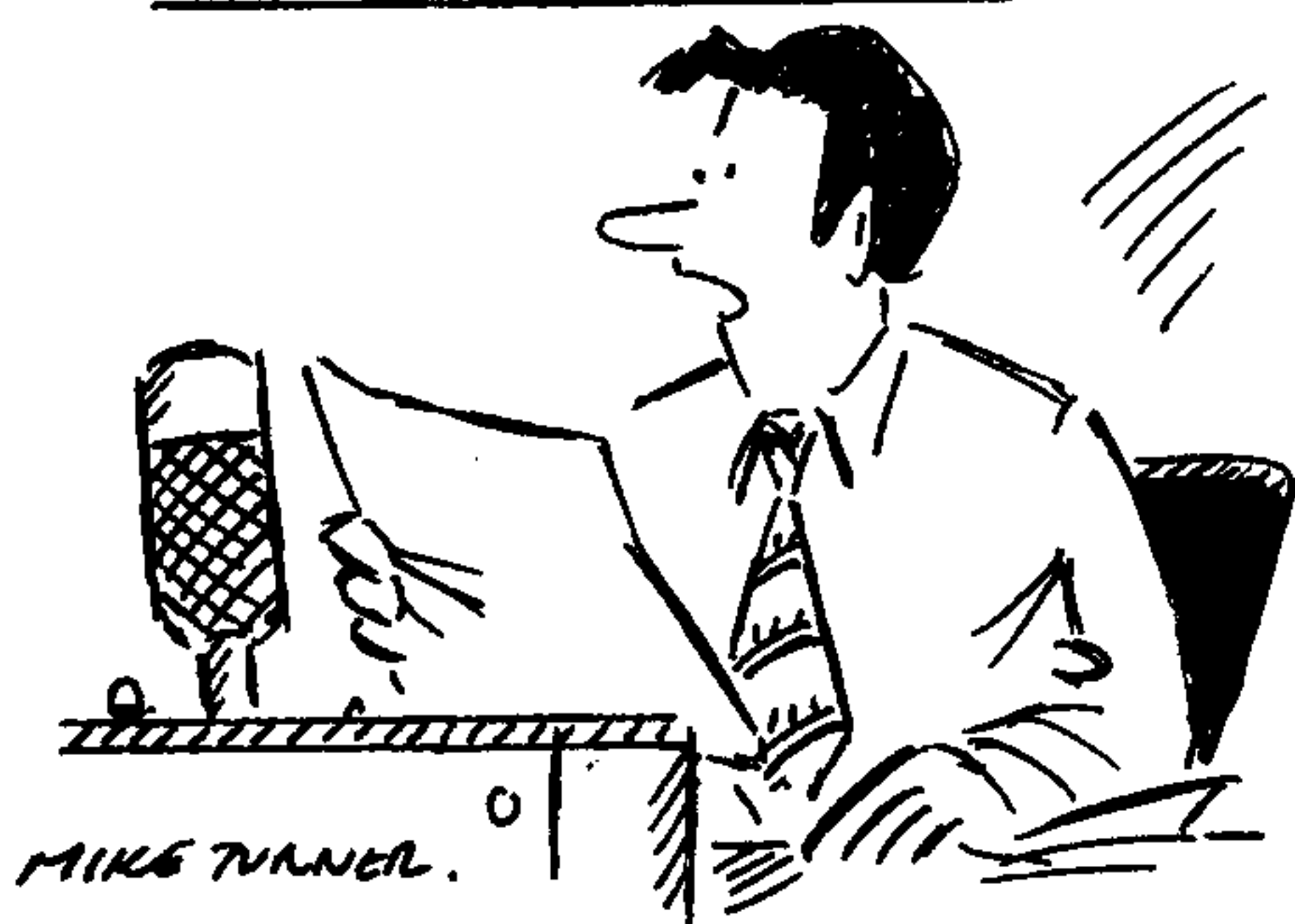
What's strange is that ITV just will not learn its lesson. **Bob Martin** has just begun a second series and it remains one of television's more bizarre experiences. For those who have missed it (and their number grows every week), *Bob Martin* stars game show host and tabloid sitting-duck Michael Barrymore as... a sorry chat show host called Bob Martin. (BM... MB. Clever stuff this.)

Now I think *Bob Martin* is supposed to be not just a star vehicle sitcom, but an *ironic* star vehicle sitcom – lots of actors and comedians put in oh-so po-mo appearances as themselves, from Stephen Fry to Bobby Davro. It also appears to take itself quite seriously – no canned laughter, a bit of swearing, very few jokes easily discernible, the occasional ishoo for us to think about. Nonetheless, if Barrymore's normal Saturday night tripe is execrable, then it follows that Barrymore being Barrymore will also be pisspoor, and no matter how many journeymen entertainers you ask to be actors playing journeymen entertainers, the end product is an ensemble cast who can't act.

So the search continues for that killer sitcom, and on the basis of *Baddiel's Syndrome*, *Bob Martin*, *Babes in the Wood*, Eddie Izzard's *Cows* and several others that the memory has sensibly expunged, all we can be sure is that it will not be written by, star or have anything to do with anyone from *Helloland*. Talking of which, the entertainer and presenter Johnny Vaughan has been commissioned to write and star in a sitcom for BBC, which will be aired in the summer...

'The Zapper'

BBC • TODAY



"News just in, little green aliens have landed in Essex. We'll be asking them how they would vote in the upcoming election..."

turn their hand to anything. You can see the attraction: such a lowbrow handyperson would make a remarkably efficient business tool, easily worth a seven-figure buy-out if they could deliver one or more reliable ratings cows.

Unfortunately recent history suggests that presenters can present, stand-ups do stand-up rather well and newsreaders do best reading the news (as anyone who has had to sit through Nicholas Witchell doing anything in the name of charidee

SPLIT personalities

Bob Moore

Darnit!
Gone and burnt mah
cakes agin

Calamity Jane Asher

BBC KNOWLEDGE

"The Pope was greeted by the strains of Vivaldi [on his historic visit to Greece]," announced Brian Barron in BBC1's *10 O'clock News* on 4 May – as the strains of Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* could be distinctly heard from the band below Barron's voiceover.

• DUMB BRITAIN •

- *Dog Eat Dog*, BBC1
- **Ulrika Jonsson**: Who wrote *Lord of the Rings*?
- **Contestant**: Enid Blyton.
- *Turning the Tables*, LBC
- **Radio**
- **Clive Bull**: What breakfast did Goldilocks eat?
- **Chris Lowry** (weatherman): Weetabix.
- **CB**: No... a bit more glutinous.
- **CL**: Alpen?

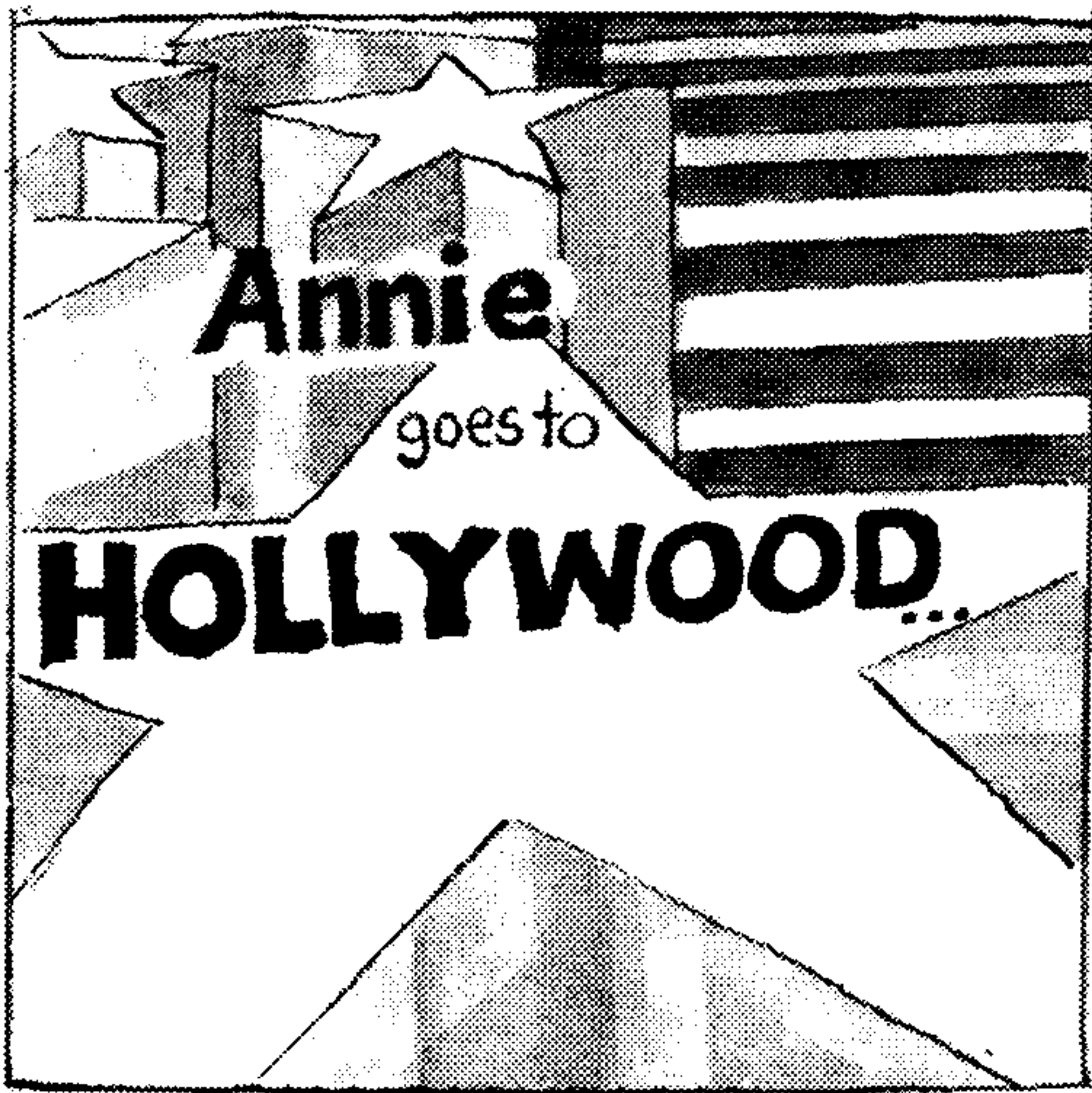


MEDIA NEWS

OUTSIDE broadcast staff at BBC Resources are less than chuffed by the latest news from Resources "management".

First they "downsized" by laying off staff. Then they adjusted the reimbursement and expenses policy for those left behind. As a result, claims began to be "lost in the system" and some camera operators ran into debt, incurring bank charges.

Now Resources managers have put themselves up for an Investors in People Award.



MORE MEDIA NEWS

WHEN Gavyn Davies, frontrunner to replace Sir Christopher "Pigling" Bland as chairman of the BBC, was appointed vice-chairman last December, allegations of "new" Labour cronyism were levelled at the Goldman Sachs millionaire. Not only is he chancellor Gordon Brown's favourite economist, but he's a close personal friend too.

The cronymism allegations were dismissed as nonsense by Downing Street, which said Davies had not undertaken "any significant political activity in the last five years". The mandarins had apparently forgotten about his role as head of an "independent" government review panel into the future funding of the BBC in 1999. Lest we too should forget, Davies's panel came up with three brilliant suggestions: a digital licence fee; the privatisation of BBC Resources; and flogging off 49 percent of Auntie's commercial arm, BBC Worldwide. All three proposals were rejected; but if Davies takes over from Pigling Bland, how long can it be before the Beeb has journeyed down the road to commercialisation past the point of no return?

In his new role as BT chairman, meanwhile, Pigling Bland will no doubt try to regain some of the ground lost by the telecommunications giant over the past decade. One of Bland's rivals on the shortlist for the BT job was Energis chief Mike Grabiner. Back in 1993 Energis undercut BT's bid to continue transmitting all of the BBC's domestic radio stations and television channels, stealing a £100m contract from under the nose of its larger competitor. As Pigling Bland has made it perfectly clear that there will be no conflict of interest while he remains chairman of the BBC, there is surely no question that BT's rescue plan will include trying to win back BBC contracts such as that lost to Energis eight years ago?

GOING LIVE

- BBC Radio 5 Live went live to Rio de Janeiro on 5 May to report on the imminent return of Ronald Biggs to the UK.**
- The best the "on the spot" reporter could do was simply to read out the front page of the *Sun* that had been faxed to him from London.

WHY did the *Times* go out on a limb to voice support for Silvio Berlusconi's controversial election campaign in Italy?

Where others cried foul at the inherent conflict of interest for the media giant and, worse still, resurrected suspicions of money-laundering, tax evasion and serial bribery on Berlusconi's part, the *Thunderer* felt his "business acumen" would prove only positive and his policies could rescue a beleaguered Italy.

Could this have anything to do with the persistent rumour that Berlusconi might finally concede some of his empire if he gets the prime job for a second time? The name constantly linked with the estimated \$7bn exchange (for which one receives a 48 percent stake in Mediaset, the only real player in Italy's commercial TV sector), is none other than Rupert Murdoch.



"Wow! Look! Somebody who isn't a celebrity!"

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

CELEBRATIONS for the 50th anniversary of the Royal Festival Hall got off to a bad start when Joanna Lumley stood beside a model of the Hall and stuck a knife in it.

The "model" was, of course, a cake which after only two stabs more or less disintegrated. By the time it was passed around it was a pile of crumbs. Not *so* unlike the Hall itself these days.

As for the birthday concerts, there were other problems that reactivated the longstanding rivalry between the Hall's two resident symphony orchestras, the LPO and the Philharmonia.

When it came to casting the high-profile, all-star gala concert for the 50th anniversary on 3 May, the Hall awarded the entire night to the Philharmonia – leaving the LPO with the consolation prize of two dates later in the birthday week. The LPO was mightily unhappy about that, as was its chief conductor Kurt Masur. At the 11th hour Masur withdrew from his agreements to appear.

According to the LPO he withdrew "to complete his recovery from a surgical procedure last autumn". But this long-delayed recovery hasn't stopped him conducting the LPO elsewhere, including a 12-concert tour of central Europe during March and April. It seems the Hall enters its second half-century on a note of discord.

MUSIC critics are no less inclined to serve their own interests than anybody else.

When the other week in the *Times* Rodney Milnes launched a blistering attack on the pretensions of country house opera, he did at least offer a half-admission (to those who read the piece carefully) that it wasn't entirely unconnected with Garsington's rash rejection of one of his own singing translations for a forthcoming show.

There was yet another example in the *Independent* last week when Rob Cowan – a record critic – wrote a glowing preview piece to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the *Gramophone*. It puffed the “long-term vision” of the magazine and its “prestigious” awards. It included an obsequious interview with *Gramophone*’s editor in chief and all in all read like a free ad. Which is not surprising if you know (as the piece, alas, omitted to mention) that Rob Cowan is the *Gramophone*’s contributing editor.

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

SUPERMODELS



Pseud's Corner

Like Prometheus chained to his rock, the eagle eating his liver out night after night, Kylie [Minogue] becomes Love's sacrificial lamb, bleating an earnest invitation to the drooling, ravenous wolf to devour her time and time again, all to a groovy techno beat. "I'll take you back, I'll take you back again." Indeed, here the love song becomes a vehicle for a harrowing portrait of humanity, not dissimilar to the Old Testament psalms. Both are messages to God that cry out into the yawning void, in anguish and self-loathing, for deliverance.

**NICK CAVE on Kylie Minogue's
'Better The Devil You Know'
Guardian**

So maybe the climate really is changing. If it and the pattern continues, will we see Bordeaux gradually producing bolder, more generous, more concentrated wines? The risk here is that the wines may then lose their elegance and complexity. The process would be less violent, less sudden and less immediately noticeable than the destruction of Afghan art by the Taliban but it would still be the disappearance of something unique.

Maison Sichel Vintage 2000 report

Floyer's work in Sunderland is a black bin-liner full of air, slumped on the floor. It reminds us that context and placement is everything, and that the slightest, most abject gesture, can be resonant. Floyer's bag of air makes me think of bodies, death, fatigue, emptiness, waste. Its starkness is overwhelming.

ADRIAN SEARLE
Guardian

Key Action 3 aims to improve the functionality, usability and acceptability of future information products and services, to enable linguistic and cultural diversity and contribute to the valorisation and exploitation of Europe's cultural patrimony, to stimulate creativity, and to enhance education and training systems for lifelong learning.

European Union's Framework V programme website, offering grant funding to businesses

Skateboarding is perhaps an unusual object of study for a study in architectural history. But it is precisely its marginal position which enables skateboarding to function historically as a critical exterior to architecture. As such, skateboarding helps to rethink architecture's manifold possibilities.

To give some indication of why this might be the case, consider that skateboarding is local, being fundamentally concerned with the micro-spaces of streets, yet is also a globally dispersed and proliferous practice, with tens of millions of practitioners worldwide. It addresses the physical architecture of the modern city, yet responds not with another object but with a dynamic presence. It says almost nothing as codified statements, yet presents an extraordinary range of implicit enunciations and meanings... *(continues)*

IAIN BURDEN
'Skateboarding, Space and the City', in
Architecture and the Body

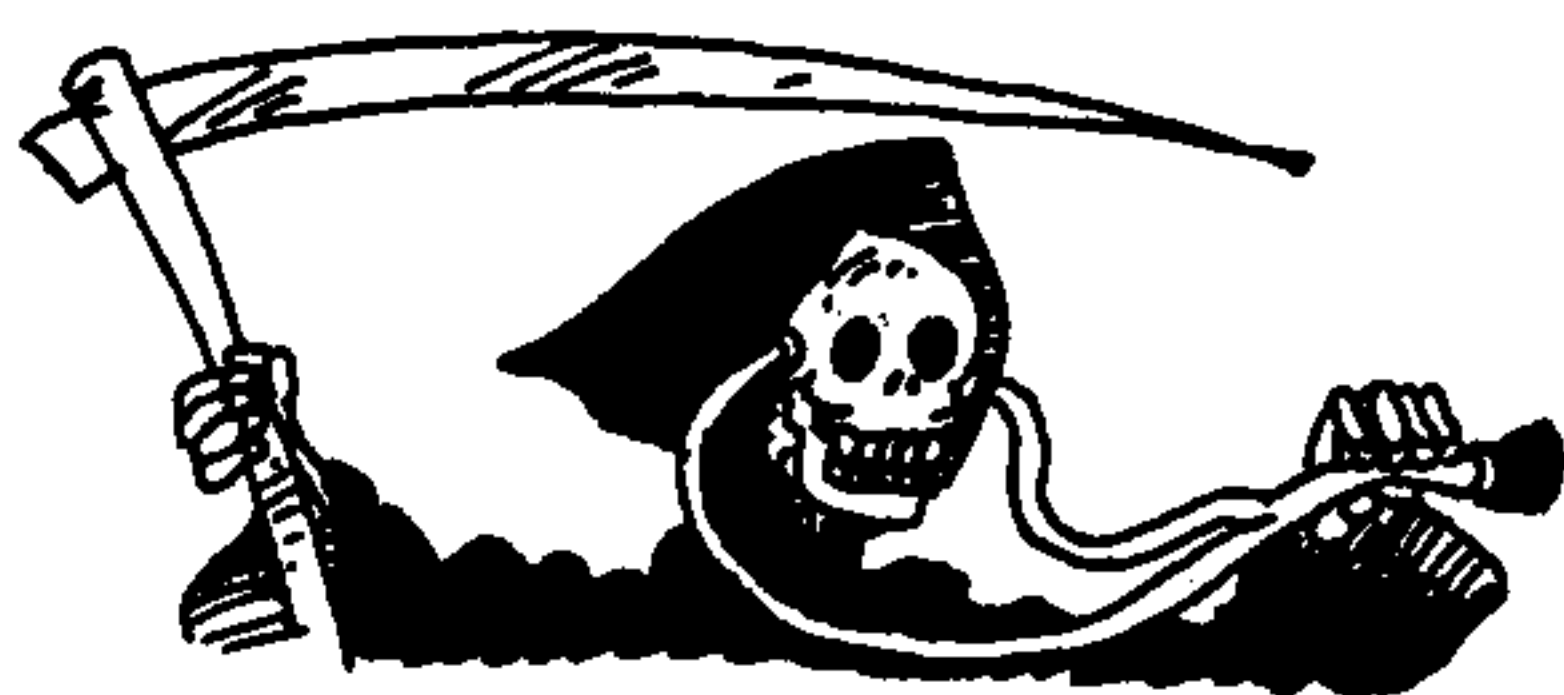
LINDSAY SEERS

Many Photographers use pin hole cameras, but not many in the way Lindsay Seers does. Lindsay makes photographs by holding a single sliver of film in her mouth. She explains: "I got interested in the idea of the photo as taking the soul, and as the mouth as being a gateway to the soul." By taking the photograph literally in side her own body the work draws attention to the relationship between the photographer and the camera.

Worcester City Art Gallery

CONTRIBUTORS: Everyone, Rod Smith, Valerie Grosvenor Myer, Sarah Edwards, Anon, Anon.

£10 paid for entries



DOING THE ROUNDS

Trust me, I'm a locum

THE failure of "new" Labour to produce any tangible improvement in the quality of NHS care over its first term in office is exemplified by its inability to protect patients from substandard locums.

The NHS employs more than 3,500 locum doctors a day to fill huge gaps in the service, and although most probably are competent, no effective checks are in place to ensure this. Earlier this month the commission for health improvement (CHI) reported on Dr James Elwood, a 78-year-old pathologist allegedly responsible for more than 215 errors and at least seven cases of "serious harm" between 1994 and 2000.

For some reason the government's tough new independent watchdog "did not set out to assess his competence and has no evidence either way". Nor will the general medical council (GMC) act since he has voluntarily removed himself from the medical register. But CHI's director Peter Homa spotted that Swindon and Marlborough trust's failure to check where he had worked before and whether he was up to the job was "shocking"; and that "all over the country trusts continue to appoint locum doctors without proper checks and then fail to monitor their performance".

We have heard this before. In 1994 Sir Robert Kilpatrick, then president of the GMC, stressed the

obligation of doctors to monitor their colleagues: "At all times patient safety must take precedence over all other concerns, including understandable reticence to bring a colleague's career into question." This, after a consultant had failed to investigate complaints that a locum anaesthetist, Dr Behrooz Irani, was endangering patients. Dr Irani left a 33-year-old man seriously brain damaged and in a persistent vegetative state, nearly repeated the error six months later and had previously been suspended by the GMC for stealing two ventilators. But he still got work in East Yorkshire.

Following this chief medical officer Kenneth Calman set up a working party. It reported in 1995 and recommended tighter scrutiny of hospital locums and the setting up of a central database of doctors who are found to be unsatisfactory. A year later these proposals were still "under review" when the NHS



"Let me through, I'm a doctor!"

Executive promised "more robust standards" in the appointment of locums.

After another year of feverish inactivity, health minister Alan Miburn entered the locum fray in 1997, announcing a "crackdown". "The existing rules governing locum doctors are inadequate. In future all locum doctors will be screened to weed out those who are a danger to patients." This followed a serious sexual assault on a child patient by a locum surgeon.

Two years of pointless rubber-stamping later and in 1999 the audit commission was unimpressed. "Although there have been several reports suggesting that the recruitment and induction procedures for locum doctors need to be improved," it said, "there is little evidence of this having happened. Professional qualifications, past criminal convictions and references are still often not checked. Consultants admitted that they often don't even meet the locum."

In April this year the commission noted little improvement in the quality control of locums in Wales, and in general practice several large studies have found that qualifications, references and past convictions are often not checked. This is not surprising to anyone from Bradford, where bogus doctor Mohamed Saeed "practised" for 30 years. He prescribed creosote for a sore throat, shampoo for conjunctivitis and survived two competency checks from real GPs before his family shopped him.

The current chief medical officer Liam Donaldson has promised to cut down on medical errors. But back in the real world the NHS remains desperately short-staffed and locums often end up working in appalling conditions. The fact that the NHS should need to employ a septuagenarian pathologist is bad enough, but he was working in sub-standard accommodation using outdated equipment rejected by other doctors and with a disproportionately high workload. Welcome to "new" Labour's "First Class NHS... where there is no room for second best."

M.D.

DOWN ON THE FARM



ONE attraction of the Miners' Arms, Slingford, in the Forest of Dean, particularly to children, was the sight of a cow and a horse living together in the paddock opposite the pub garden. Moo the Cow and Clearwell Katy the horse were such close friends, as Moo's owner Lesley Worgan put it, that "I think the cow thought she was a horse".

One recent Sunday lunchtime, when the pub garden was packed, eight MAFFia officials turned up and said they had come to kill Moo. Since the cow seemed quite healthy, they were asked to test Moo to see if she had foot-and-mouth, as the law requires. It would be "too expensive", they replied.

The pub's customers then watched in disbelief as the cow was put to death with a fatal injection, and removed from the paddock dangling from a mobile crane, only yards from diners eating their roast beef. In fact many were so upset by this grisly scene they had already cancelled their orders and left. Moo's owner said: "I think they are now just killing for the sake of killing. It is horrible."

Similar sentiments have been expressed countless times recently by farmers in Cumbria, Devon and southern Scotland, as the MAFFia's *Einsatzgruppen* continue to roam the countryside killing thousands of healthy animals with no scientific or legal justification whatever. Yet much of this frenzy of killing has remained wholly unreported by the media. These massacres have not shown up in the daily reports issued by MAFF, precisely because the slaughtered animals were not infected. The only statistic MAFF will now admit to is the "headline figure" showing cases where the disease has actually been confirmed. And that of course is the figure MAFF is now doing all it can to massage downwards, because that is what Alastair Campbell wants.

The only order which matters is that the figures must support one overriding message: that our Beloved Leader has the crisis licked and that, as those graphs from Professor Roy Anderson's Imperial College computer so conveniently confirm, the epidemic will be over by 7 June. All science, law and truth have been chucked out of the window. Control of the epidemic is now being driven solely by politics and the government spin-machine. And it is interesting that one of Mr Blair's chief collaborators in this has been Prof Anderson himself, whose past record, as is revealed

elsewhere in this issue, scarcely inspires total confidence.

As for what this crisis is doing for ministers' own grasp on the truth, a tiny example was a petulant answer given by agriculture minister Nick Brown when being grilled by the BBC's John Humphrys over how MAFF is now fiddling the figures.

Brown was clearly floundering as Humphrys produced one piece of evidence after another to show how MAFF had shamelessly changed the basis on which its figures are calculated, basing this on a newspaper article by an expert on the crisis, Dr Richard North. Brown's only response was to launch a personal attack on North for having six years ago organised opposition to the setting up of MAFF's notorious Meat Hygiene Service, as if this alone discredited anything he had to say about foot-and-mouth.

What Brown omitted to mention was that the most conspicuous expression of that opposition to the MHS was a Commons motion signed by more than 100 MPs of all parties. The name at the head of that motion, as Nick Brown well knew, was Tony Blair.

'Even Newer Muckspreaders'

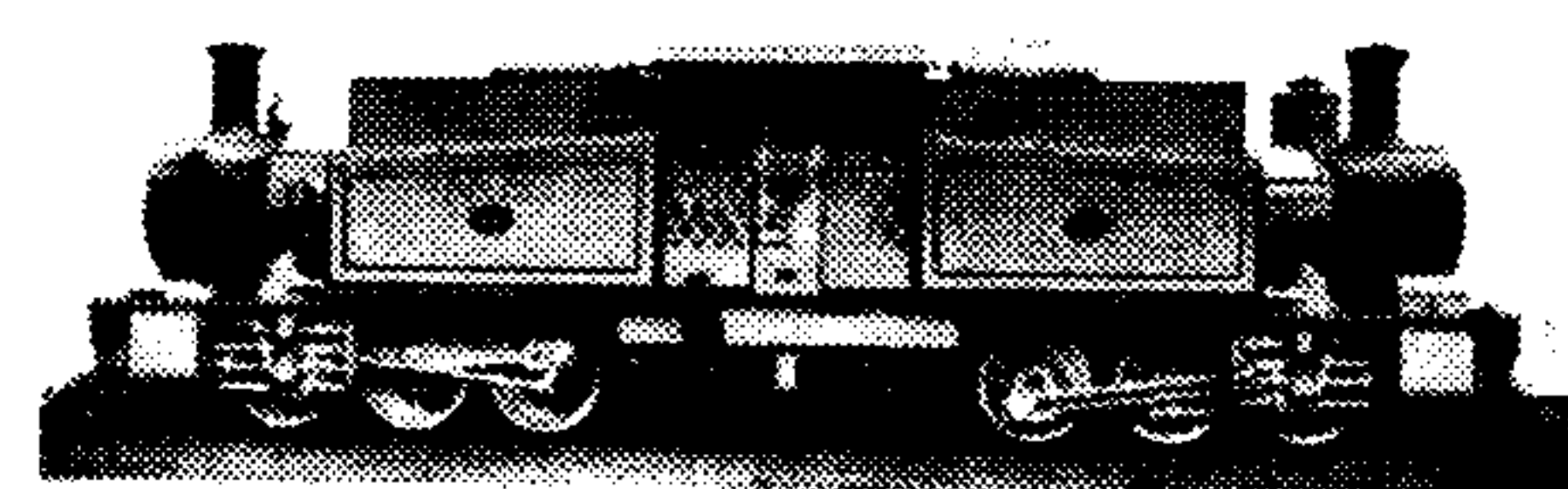
Down on the Fish Farm

AFTER 16 months of prevarication, Ross Finny, Scottish executive environment and rural development minister, has followed the advice of his "minders" and announced there will be no public inquiry into the murky business of fake salmon farming.

His decision insults lots of people: the two powerful Scottish parliamentary committees that asked for an inquiry; the Fishmongers Hall-based salmon and trout association and the Scottish anglers' national association, not to mention other anglers' representatives, concerned environmentalists and even some salmon farmers themselves who believed an inquiry would clear them of killing wild fish and causing gross pollution.

While a bunch of Scottish executive civil servants are celebrating a famous victory, their incompetence and failure to regulate this dirty industry has again been shielded from public scrutiny. Allan Berry, the shellfish farmer who sparked off the call for a public inquiry by petitioning parliament, is sanguine. "I am less than surprised," he said. "These people are terrified of being exposed. With spurious science, half-truths and obfuscation they have protected their dirty baby from public scrutiny for decades. But the truth will out."

'Old Trout'



SIGNAL FAILURES

THE tug-of-war over London Underground – central versus regional government – is likely to be repeated in Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool, Sheffield and Newcastle.

Each of those cities has a regional passenger transport authority (PTA) and executive, created under Labour's Barbara Castle so buses and trains could be overseen by local government.

As well as building new railways and stations, including the Tyne and Wear metro, the PTAs have coordinated trains and buses, made them easier to use and kept fares relatively low.

Across mainland Europe responsibility for all but long-distance trains is being devolved to regional government; but "new" Labour wants to head in the opposite direction. Local services promoted by PTAs take up track capacity that could otherwise be devoted to long-distance services – which are more profitable for the private operators.

Alastair Morton, the keen capitalist who chairs the strategic rail authority (SRA), is frustrated by the PTAs' parochialism and possibly jealous of their rail strategies. He is so enraged by the PTAs' defiance that he publicly branded Rob Donald, head of the West Midlands transport executive, "stoppo". His strategic agenda (*Eye 1024*) accuses the executives of sticking to service levels guaranteed in franchise deals and says the PTAs' regulation of fares "removes incentives on operators to improve services" – ie the incentives which have transformed the quality of services by Virgin, South West Trains and others. "The SRA has initiated a process of review and, where possible, amendment which will occupy a fair part of 2001," adds the document darkly.

The SRA wants consistency between PTA and non-PTA areas. Does that mean the latter will at last get a development strategy, proper fares regulation, more services guaranteed against cuts and more investment? Er, no. The onus is on the PTA areas to dumb down, surrender powers to profit-hungry companies like First Group and join the morass which passes for a rail service in the rest of England. One regional transport executive says that would make a 10 percent cut in rush-hour seats officially acceptable.

'Dr B. Ching'

ROTTEN BOROUGH



NORTON COMMANDER

A NEW era of local government dawned on 25 April when Tory-led West Oxfordshire district council (WODC) became the first local council to adopt the new cabinet-style structure, and Barry Norton was elected unopposed as leader.

Norton's first democratic act was to name his five fellow cabinet members, all Tories, and appoint his daughter Louise Chapman as cabinet member with special responsibility for culture and tourism. When the local press put to him the outrageous suggestion of nepotism made by some critics, Norton retorted: "Given Louise's ability and commitment, not appointing her to the cabinet simply because she is my daughter would have been unfair."

Joining Mrs Chapman, who is mayor of Witney, is cabinet member David Robertson. He chairs the West Oxfordshire Conservative Association, of which Norton is treasurer. Mrs Chapman is also a member of the local Tory party, best known for its acrimonious break with Witney MP Shaun Woodward, who defected to Labour in December 1999.

Norton's second act as leader was to adopt the recommendations of an independent report by Dr Declan Hall, from the Institute of Local Government at Birmingham University, who advised that members' allowances should increase almost fourfold, making WODC councillors some of the best paid in the country. Over the next year Norton will be paid £17,950 for his services as leader, calculated at two and a half days' work per week, while the well-connected Mrs Chapman and her cabinet colleagues will receive £14,400 each for their services to the public.

OUT OF BOUNDS

SO GREAT was the public outrage over the sale of sold folks' homes by Isle of Wight council that the council was forced to set up an independent inquiry.

As Eye readers will recall, when the island's privatised elderly care service, "Islecare", ran into financial difficulties in the mid-90s, it was flogged off to an outfit called Somerset Care which runs residential care homes in the West Country (*Eye 1016*). Last year Somerset Care was the subject of a damning report by the charity commission, which severely criticised the way in which three trustees paid themselves more than £400,000 over five years. One of those trustees, Peter Day, was a childhood chum of the Isle of Wight council treasurer, John Pulsford, who masterminded the Islecare sell-off, a six-year contract which has proved so lucrative for Somerset Care that the firm

now has reserves of £15m.

Who could be brought in to give a balanced view of the affair? Step forward Peter "Knows No" Bounds, the former chief executive of Liverpool city council who made numerous appearances in this column during his Murkyside reign from 1991 to 1999. Bounds's greatest achievement at Liverpool was to saddle the city with a £774m debt and the highest council tax in the country, although this did not deter him from awarding himself an inflation-busting pay rise to £116,447 in 1996, while at the same time presiding over a 2 percent pay cut for 24,000 lesser council workers.

Bringing the full weight of his Liverpool experience to bear on the Islecare inquiry, Knows No's 23-page report was a whitewash. The five councillors on the independent panel to whom he reported at the end of April, however, declared themselves "uneasy" with the lack of documentary evidence for vital transactions. The panel was particularly furious that when Bounds's report was published a week before they met, it was accompanied by a spin-doctoring press release concocted by Knows No, Isle of Wight council's chief executive Bernard Quoroll and head of communications Julie Hollings, which trumpeted: "Council vindicated over care homes transfer".

CULTURE VULTURES

CSL's corporate slogan "people are our culture", has a particularly hollow ring to it in the London borough of Southwark where the private firm runs the council's housing benefit and council tax departments.

The latest victim of CSL's caring corporate culture is George Hillheard, who at the age of 54 hanged himself in his kitchen after he mistakenly received a court summons for non-payment of £230 council tax.

Southwark coroner's court recently heard how relatives of Hillheard found his body hanging inches above the floor with a suicide note, the summons and a pen and paper bearing his council tax calculations nearby. Following Labour council leader Stephanie Elsy's admission that "the council failed in its duty", details of this latest cock-up have arrived on the desk of the local government ombudsman.

Hopefully Hillheard's unfortunate death will not be viewed as an isolated incident by the ombudsman, who will be mindful of other examples of CSL demonstrating to the residents of Southwark that "people are our culture". The case of Peckham pensioner Frossa Carlettides, for instance, who last year suffered a heart attack after receiving a letter from CSL saying she owed £14,525.93 housing benefit. She owed nothing.

HUMBUG OF THE WEEK

DURING his recent UK tour, Nelson Mandela was invited to visit Leeds to open the city's new £11m Millennium Square. The anti-apartheid leader has a sentimental connection with the site. Until last year the area in front of the Leeds Civic Hall, a fine Portland Stone building housing the council chambers and offices, was home to a pleasant sunken garden called the Mandela Garden.

To celebrate the millennium, however, the Labour council decided to concrete over this area and turn it into a venue for outdoor meetings and events. The one small hitch was that the square was not granted a public entertainment licence until a week after the official opening when the council had



"I always like to have a good clear-out at this time of the year..."

to twist the arm of its own environmental health department to persuade it to support the application.

There are several problems with the city centre square as a venue for large-scale events, including its proximity to the Leeds General Infirmary and a new residential development being built as part of the council's policy of living in the city centre. Having belatedly realised these difficulties, the council hopes to circumvent its own by-laws restricting noise in residential areas by sending mail-shots to local residents prior to big events.

Meanwhile the Mandela Garden has been replanted on a smaller scale just in time for a rededication ceremony to mark the great statesman's visit. During a special council meeting to confer the freedom of the city on the former South African president, Andrew Carter, the long-standing leader of the Tory group, made a fawning speech in which he described Mandela as a reconciler who had united his people in the cause of freedom. Unfortunately Councillor Carter had no time to remind those present of the Tories' attitude to Mandela when he was in prison and really needed support. In 1983, when the Labour council named the gardens after the ANC leader as a gesture of support for the anti-apartheid movement, Carter and his Tory chums opposed the move on the grounds that Mandela was a terrorist, and pledged to rename the gardens should they ever come to power in Leeds Civic Hall.

HOWARD'S WAY

NEW Labour's former local government supremo Howard Knight set up Project '98 as a reaction to old Labour sleaze in Doncaster, promising to clean up local government with new "suitability" tests. The 12th Doncaster councillor to pass through this vetting procedure was education chairman Chas Harrison, who last week became the 62nd person to be arrested in the never-ending Donnygate saga.

A panicking Millbank last week finally got the message that everybody elected to Doncaster before 1997 is now extremely vulnerable to arrest. With the impending election ruling out the long overdue call to the commissioners, all of the surviving old guard were banned from seeking position and a new leadership was sought from the more recent batch of burghers.

So who better to act as their mentor than er... our old friend Howard Knight, at whose door the whole extended cock-up might reasonably be laid?

High Principals

THE list of "people's peers" drawn up and approved by Peter Mandelson's crony Lord Stevenson was treated with some scepticism but not in a remarkable email sent to staff at Edinburgh University on 26 April.

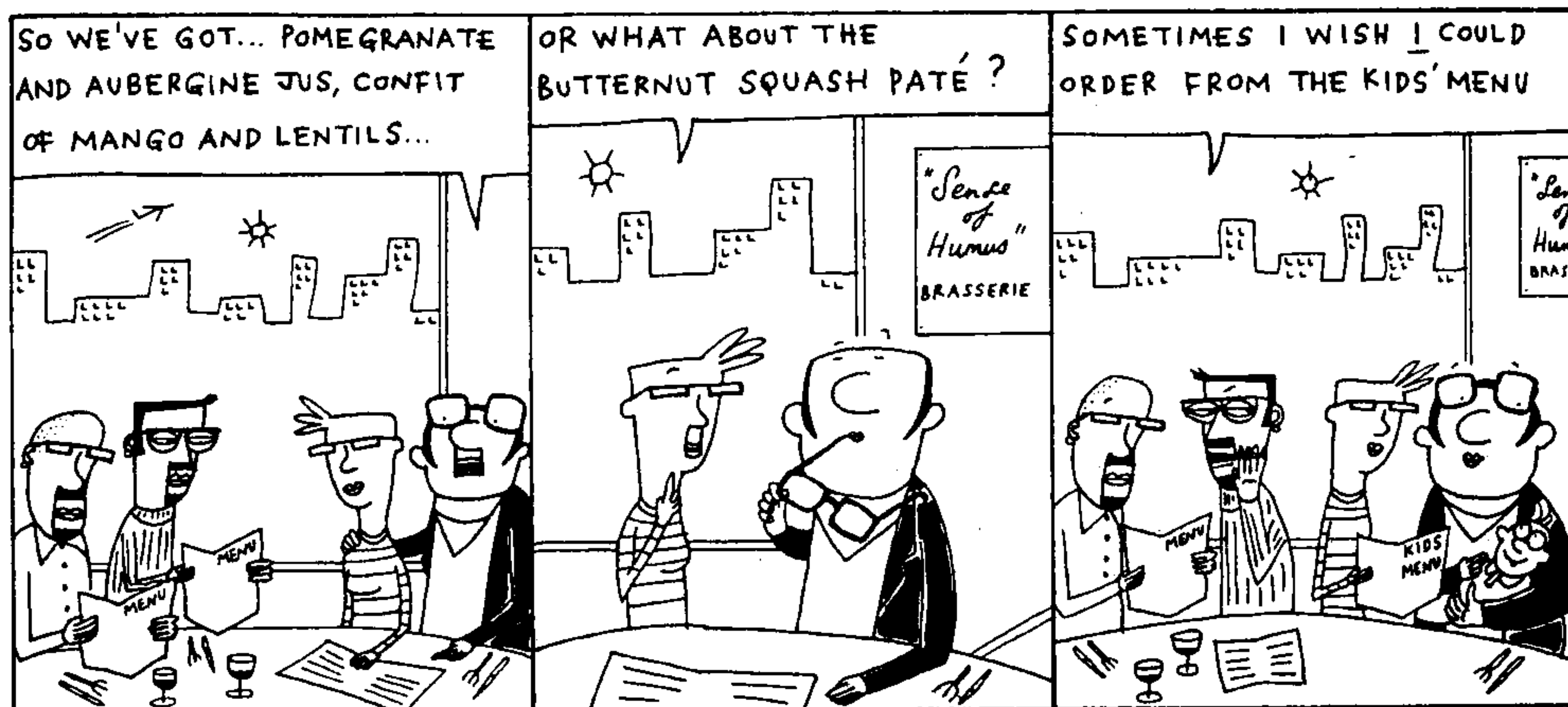
"IT IS IMPORTANT," the message emphasised in capital letters, "THAT THIS MESSAGE IS CIRCULATED TO MEMBERS OF STAFF WITHIN YOUR DEPARTMENT, BY ONWARD E-MAIL TRANSMISSION, MULTIPLE HAND COPIES OR NOTICEBOARD STAFF."

The endless gushing message that followed was from Dr Martin Lowe, secretary to the university. It amounted to a "warm welcome to the news that the Principal, Professor Sir Stewart Sutherland, has been appointed to membership of the House of Lords in the new non-party political list".

There was however, no reference to the fact that Sir Stewart Sutherland had been nominated for his new honour by, er, Sir Stewart Sutherland.

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON

KNIFE & PACKER



Letters



Read letters day

Sir,

I should like to complain about the truncated letters page in the last Eye. The sheer absence of letters from persons wishing to complain about the presence of jokes in a humorous magazine, or make pedantic corrections, or "set the record straight" or cancel their subscriptions was enough to make me cancel my subscription. If I had one.

Yours sincerely,
COLM NUGENT,

London WC2.

Brussels spout

Sir,

In HP Sauce (see last Eye) you attack Andrew Rosindell for the terrible crime of associating with the Italian Alleanza Nazionale which you generously describe as "neo-fascist".

It is true that Alleanza had roots in the old MSI which was originally a neo-fascist party, but that description is today patently untrue. Their leader Gianfranco Fini, who may shortly become Italy's deputy prime minister (and who received foreign secretary Douglas Hurd when previously in government) has transformed his party into a modern right-wing democratic party just as Tony Blair's friend D'Alema did with the old Italian Communist Party. There is still a rump Communist Party and a rump neo-fascist party (Fiamma Tricolore), which is what you may be thinking of or is it just that HP Sauce is to be served with a dose of left-wing double standards?

"Raving right-wing" newspapers like the Times have accepted that the Alleanza (who sit together with the Conservatives in the Parliamentary Assembly to the Council of Europe) is a modern democratic party, so Rosindell would appear to be better informed than you.

Here in the European Parliament the AN Members (who by the way don't have two heads and almost invariably vote with the moderate EPP/ED group) were elected on a European federalist and pro single currency platform and on the same list as Mario Segni, a moderate former Christian Democrat who is widely respected for reforming the Italian electoral system.

Andrew Rosindell, who is a PPC in my region, is an assiduous campaigner and sincere young man who is perfectly entitled to develop links and friendships with fellow conservative parties from other countries. He proves the point that Eurosceptics (or do you prefer the term Little-Englander) can work together happily with like-minded Europeans.

Yours truly,

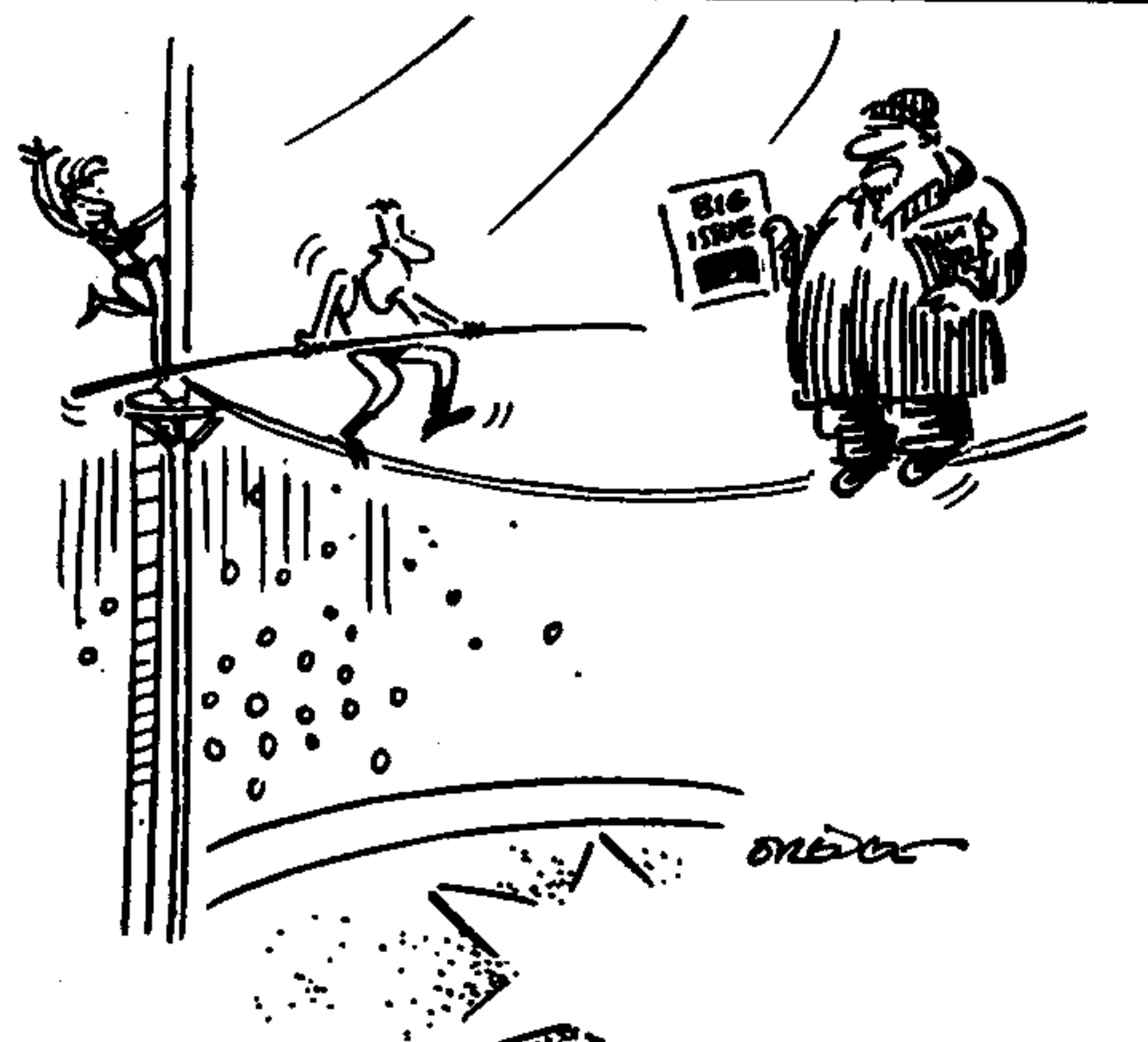
DR. CHARLES TANNOCK MEP,

The European Parliament, Brussels.

Wild about salmon

Sir,

As a keen angler and member of the Salmon and Sea Trout Trust (SSTT), a body set up to preserve the diminishing wild stocks of salmon and sea trout, I



was bemused and amazed by the patronising arrogance and cack that pervaded Martin Morrison's letter concerning salmon farming (Eye 1026).

In over 30 years as a game angler, I have seen for myself the environmental damage that is due to so-called Norwegian "regulated fish-farming". For example, we now have an epidemic of sea lice and infectious salmon anaemia (ISA) from releases of farmed fish, water pollution from all the nasty chemicals used in fish farming such as ivermectin and of course from the vast quantities of ammonia produced from the battery reared fish shite. All this has a detrimental effect on wild stocks.

It should be noted that salmon is a migratory species, does not feed in fresh water and therefore should not be reared in captivity. The end result will always be an inferior product to the wild fish. In addition, farmed salmon have to be fed a chemical dye mixed with the feed pellets. In the wild they would obtain their colour naturally by ingesting prawns and shrimps. The feed pellets are made from concentrate derived from sand eels and are rich in polychlorinated biphenols (PCB), and therefore the levels of PCBs in farmed salmon are substantially higher than in wild salmon. I personally would never eat farmed salmon nor would I even feed it to my cat Angus. I now hear that the Yanks are developing GM salmon with human growth genes.

Regards,
PADDY McGRORY,

Co Armagh.

Lookalike



Tito



Dr Evil

Sir,

Has anyone else noticed the uncanny resemblance between Dennis Tito, the bald, crazy-eyed multi-millionaire scientist recently orbiting the Earth in a dangerous space station and Dr Evil, Austin Powers' deadly adversary?

Yours, with my Mojo intact,
DAI HICKS,

Via e-mail.

Taking the Michael

Sir,

Square Eyes admits he reviews shows he hasn't seen [Er... not quite what he admitted. Ed] but instead of leaving it at that tries somehow to justify his incompetence.

He says: "'Parkinson' is now perilously close to becoming an in-house trail."

How can he justify that statement?

The facts are since "Parkinson" returned to BBC1 in 1998 there have been 58 shows featuring 155 guests. Only eight were promoting new BBC programmes.

I would have thought that in the same period any national newspaper - even those opposed to Auntie - would have done a better job of selling BBC product.

Whether he is reviewing shows without watching them or making statements he cannot substantiate Square Eyes reveals worrying shortcomings.

He says drink is not to blame. Might the real truth be he doesn't know what he is talking about. Surely not?

MICHAEL PARKINSON,

London W1.

● "Parkinson's" guest list for the 2001 series had seven out of 28 guests talking about BBC shows in 10 episodes: Jack Dee [21/4]; Alistair McGowan [13/4]; Ulrika Jonsson [13/4]; Amanda Burton [7/4]; Tamzin Outhwaite [31/03]; Lee Evans [17/3]; John Cleese [10/3].

Playing the flag

Sir,

In last week's legal news you highlighted the ludicrous prosecutions against Lindis Percy. Your readers may like to know I have now had a reply to my question as to whether flags of other countries receive more protection here than in the country they represent. The reply is a classic ministerial fudge from Lord Bassam. "Any protection accorded to the flag of a foreign state by the law of that state does not apply in the United Kingdom."

The US values freedom of expression over desecration of their flag. In the UK it seems that now we are so anxious to dispel any possible protests over the use of Britain as part of the US Star Wars programme that our government is determined that freedom of expression be stamped on hard.

Yours,
SUE MILLER,

House of Lords.

Oh dear Dear

Sir,

Re: Autism Epidemic. Your correspondent Brian Dear is unable to believe that there really has been an epidemic of autism (Eye 1026), perhaps partly because the implications would be so deeply disturbing. However, I suggest that the few statistics that are available point to a steep rise. I quote from Wakefield education department's own report of autumn 1999: "Before 1992, there was a very small number. No reliable information remains, but it is likely that there were no more than four or five such children... We now have 111 children diagnosed and stated."

Even Sutton - where Brian lives - has confirmed to me that they are aware of an increase. My belief is that there has indeed been a greater awareness of autism, as Brian rightly points out, and a greater preparedness to formally diagnose the condition, but that this cannot possibly explain the scale of increase that is now being identified.

Recent published and unpublished studies in the UK, by Taylor, Miller, by Kaye, Melero-Montez and Jick, by Scott and by Shattock, also all point to a steep increase, perhaps up to tenfold in a decade.

As for the timing of degeneration in relation to MMR, we also need to explain how many of these children apparently acquired bowel problems and acute food sensitivities around the time they became autistic, and all in the period beyond vaccination. We also need to explain why there are cases of older children, well beyond the age of infant immunisation, who have then had MMR and subsequently degenerated into autism after several years of normal childhood. And many autistic children aren't usually "shy or mildly awkward", they are all too often seriously or severely brain damaged. We need to know why.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID THROWER,

Stockton Heath, Cheshire.

Civic defence

Sir,

Piloti's glib little piece in "Nooks and Corners" about replacing a long-demolished building in Castle Street, Ludlow, is arrogant and misinformed.

On what evidence does he base his conclusion that architects Rod Robinson Associates of Hereford are not capable of providing a suitable design? Has he visited the (extremely restricted) site or seen detailed plans? Or is this sweeping judgement based solely on the evidence of a single elevation - which, as is reported, has already been withdrawn?

The local Civic Society, which I chair, did not welcome the proposals unreservedly as is wrongly stated. We felt that the originally-submitted façade was inappropriate but did not rule out a modern solution provided it was of better design. This seems to be your correspondent's conclusion, too, so we are at a loss to understand his sarcasm.

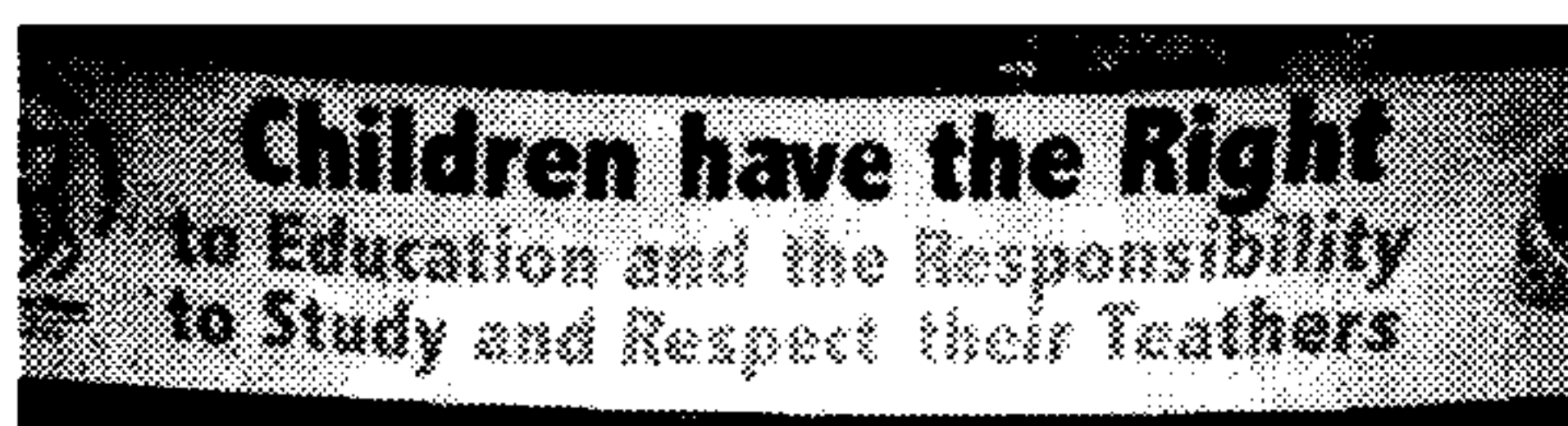
Yours etc,
MEG DAWSON,

Ludlow Civic Society.

WHO SEEK ME? German lady, 50, slim and honest, light blonde, to wish a man (n.s.) without belly for a wonderful life together.

Costa Blanca News

I-SPY *Praslin Island, Seychelles*



Submitted by Sonny & Dolly Banner. £10 paid for similar submissions. (SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)

Spectator sport

Sir,
Your spoof census form lampoons the ownership of free copies of *The Spectator*.
But what's this? Enclosed with my *Private Eye* is an offer for four free copies of *The Spectator*.
Now that's satire!

Yours faithfully,
STEVEN AQUILINA,

Via e-mail.



"Forget dolphins... you haven't lived until you've swum with the sharks!"

Stage whispers

Sir,
Has Bookworm's long-standing devotion to pipe smoking addled his mind? It's certainly blunted his awareness of the full facts about Sheridan Morley's disclosure of Alec Guinness's arrest for cottaging before the publication of his *Gielgud* biography (*Books & Bookmen*, *Eye* 1027).

While he is no doubt correct with the details of Morley's indiscretions at the Garrick party in his honour – the dear old boy is rather adept at publicising his many endeavours in theatreland – he was wrong to suggest that the information about Guinness did not get out before the *Sunday Times* serialisation.

Morley happily "blabbed" details of the revelations to me too and *The Stage* printed the story long before the *Fun Day Times* gave it an airing for what I gather was a rather hefty serialisation fee. We were happy to get the scoop for free.

Yours pedantically,
BEN DOWELL,

Broadcasting Reporter, *The Stage*.

Ruck and maul

Sir,
Peter Carter Ruck? (*Legal News*, 4 May). A misprint surely – or has he changed his name since you last wrote about him?

Yours sincerely,
MALCOLM OLIVER,

North Berwick, E. Lothian.

Young Knowles all

Sir,

Lunchtime O'Boulez should endeavour to get over his in-built snobbery. The quartet in "Bond" (*Eye* 1027) may not be styled in the traditional string quartet mode that he would prefer, but surely an attempt to entice younger audiences from "normal" backgrounds to classical music should be welcomed? These girls are talented, produce wonderful music that is undoubtedly based in the classical genre but accessible to all, and extremely beautiful. Such a mix is a delight in the usual pop circles where talent counts for nothing and also in the classical scene which delights in trying as hard as possible to be unpopular as if that makes it superior. I'm a young oik, who has never bought a classical album before but I think they're wonderful.

Young, good-looking, successful and talented, I've no idea why Lunchtime O'Boulez would dislike them...

Yours sincerely,
MATTHEW KNOWLES,

Wembley.

Dumb question

Sir,

At the risk of being a ponce, why does your Dumb Britain writer laugh at the contestant who said that "Australians" was the proper description of the "indigenous people of Australia"? That contestant was right. The Aborigines were "Australians" when the country's European population were still picking fleas off each other in the bilges of the transportation hulks.

Your writer is the weakest link. Goodbye.

ALEX CLARKE,

Via e-mail.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"[Bayern Munich] lost in the semi-finals of the Champions League to Real Madrid last year and the year before that were beaten in the final by Manchester United, so their European pedigree is second to none."

SIMON BROTHERTON, *Radio 5 Live*
(David Ashbridge)

"There's Ottmar Hitzfeld, the two-year-old Bayern Munich Manager."

MIKE HILL, *ESPN*
(Jane Garcia)

"[With our new fares] If people want to get out into the countryside or travel to London, they can go to Liverpool or Manchester for as little as £10."

RICHARD BRANSON, *Radio 4*
(Mike Heaney)

"...and Shay Given has shaken off a broken nose to play."

BBC Grandstand
(Peter Knott)

"This is a real cat and carrot situation."
DAVID PLEAT, *Radio 5*
(John Old)

Letter from Kuwait from Our Own Correspondent

WE ARABS like to think of ourselves as the cradle of civilisation, people who were pushing back the boundaries of mathematics, architecture and philosophy while you in Europe were still in the Dark Ages. And we find our culture and beliefs under threat from your base instincts as never before.



In this new electronic age, the apostles of evil are donning the most devilish of disguises. For in the latest twist to what we know to be the age-old Jewish-inspired conspiracy against the purity of Islam, our bearded sages have identified the furry-created yellow Pokémon children's toy phenomenon as a latter day manifestation of the Protocols of Zion.

For some time anonymous tracts have been circulating which explain that, far from being the innocent icons of Japanese commercialism loathed by parents the world over, the name *al-buw-ke-moon* – as the characters are known in these parts – means nothing less than "against God and Islam". The purchase of such wickedness is tantamount to "acting against the Palestinians". And now it is official: the religious authorities in Saudi Arabia have declared Pokémon to be the Salman Rushdie of the playground, issuing a *fatwa* against the cartoon phenomenon for encouraging gambling and for being "suspiciously Jewish."

Here in the Gulf, Qatar and Dubai have followed suit, as have Jordan and the Palestinians. Dubai's pious stance is especially strange, given the emirate's tolerance of western nightclubs and its ever growing population of young Russian "escorts". For although Dubai is one of the few places that recognises Afghanistan's fiercely fundamentalist Taliban government, we suspect it is a gesture not so much of solidarity with true believers as a means of annoying its anti-Taliban neighbours across the water in Iran, who covet some of the country's islands.

The problem, of course, is that with more than half the population under 20, our elders are feeling ever more out of touch. No longer, it seems, are the gentle pleasures of a good Quran-memorisation contest enough for the young, attracted instead to the local burger joint, racing the latest model cars along the corniche or smoking smuggled Iranian dope on the beach. One headmaster though has recently banned US marine-style short haircuts as a fundamental assault on our cherished traditions and values.

And here in Kuwait, Shaikh Hai Al-Hai, one of our top religious scholars, has applauded the *fatwa*, adding that Pokémon is an agent also of Christianity. Our own struggle with western poison may be closer to home. Staff at UNIKOM, the UN mission which is all that stands between us and Saddam Hussein, has been breaking our laws and insulting our values by smuggling truckloads of whisky from the Iraqi menace itself through the Al Abdaly border post. Our police say UN people were selling it on to the self-styled Filipino Mafia in Kuwait City, by which time a crate of Red Label would fetch nearly £500. Apparently, certain members of UNIKOM were making use of their status as exempt from customs searches to boost Iraq's sanctions-hit economy.

Investigations continue, but we fear the politics of compromise may mean the real culprits may remain as anonymous as those exporters and traders able to ensure that whatever other shortages Iraq may suffer, Johnny Walker will not be among them.

It is with much relief, then, that the faithful are able to applaud the dedicated efforts of the most bold defenders of Islam. We still talk about the Egyptian doctor at our national oil company kicked out at the end of last year after the discovery of a plot to plant a huge bomb at an American base, an operation in which some of our top soldiers were also implicated. But it is with even more excitement that we learn of new initiatives by the unshaven fraternity to take on the new technology and turn it against those who would destroy our way of life.

Selected expatriates and diplomats across the region are being targeted by an email campaign that contains an attachment of an actual beheading. Unkind souls have taken this exercise in education and enlightenment to be an act of intimidation. We understand that top US officials are increasingly fretful about the possibility of a looming e-Jihad, while even your own gnome-like foreign minister has recently aired his own concerns about the threat of terrorist attack on computer systems via email and the internet. As we say, Allahu Akbar! God is Great.

HOM SAP



AUSTIN



FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH

“All of a sudden I was smelling something disgusting, and I started to gag,” Monique Garcia told reporters at a news conference in Santa Monica. “I looked round at my friends, and saw that they were covered in something absolutely gross. And as I looked down at myself, I realised I was too.”

Garcia's attorney, Gloria Allred, then described what had occurred at the Snow Summit Ski Resort in the San Bernardino Mountains, during the videotaping of a segment for MTV's "Dude, This Sucks" Show. “Miss Garcia and her friend, Kelli Stoat, were standing in the front row of the audience, when a two-man act called Shower Rangers came on stage. Without warning or explanation, the two Shower Rangers turned their backsides to the audience, and both opened a flap on the back of their shorts, exposing their naked buttocks. Before my clients could say or do anything, the Shower Ranger whose buttocks faced them



bent over, spread his cheeks, and emitted a spray of fecal matter over them. We learned later that he had given himself a three-quart enema immediately before going on stage, to ensure a large quantity of spray.

“We believe that subjecting young people without their knowledge and consent to such an outrageous and indecent act is medically unsound, and completely unacceptable and intolerable. My clients want to send a message that this type of act goes far beyond the bounds of decency, and are therefore seeking compensatory and punitive damages for the intentional infliction of risk of disease, emotional distress, negligence, and battery.”

MTV's president for programming, Brian Graden, later apologised, saying “this is a terrible incident. I can state categorically that the episode will never be aired, and we have taken steps to ensure such an event never happens again.” (*Sacramento Bee*, 6/4/01. Spotter: Andrew Morris)

“I wanted to go poo-poo at five in the morning, on the day before Good Friday,” Christiani Ejembi told an ecstatic crowd at the Sam Ethnam air force base in Lagos, “and as soon as I slid the bolt, I was overwhelmed by feelings of shock and fear. But then a feeling of great calm suddenly came over me, and there in the cubicle, I had my first visible experience of the Virgin Mary.”

Since that first vision of the Virgin, the Nigerian air force base has been attracting hundreds of pilgrims each day, all anxious to visit the miraculous lavatory cubicle, and to sing hymns of praise. Ms Ejembi's brother, John Abbah, later told reporters that “the Virgin has been appearing during poo-poo to us every day since then, usually at about 7pm. Yesterday, my sister and I spent about thirty minutes going poo-poo, and receiving instructions and messages from Her. It has pleased Her to tell us to charge for admission to the hallowed toilet, and for passing on messages to the faithful while going poo-poo. Yes, it is true that no one else going poo-poo has yet seen the Virgin, but that is because we do not have Her itinerary. She can appear at any time it pleases Her, usually on the louvre of the toilet.” (*This Day [Nigeria]*, 16/4/01)

— ● —

“Zoosexuals are not animal abusers,” Phillip Buble told members of the Criminal Justice Committee in the State House in Augusta, Maine, “and we do far less damage to them than people who eat animal flesh, hunt animals, or allow medical experiments that torture animals. Me and my significant other live together as a married couple, and have a lifelong commitment to each other. Canine or not, in the eyes of God, she is truly my beloved wife.”

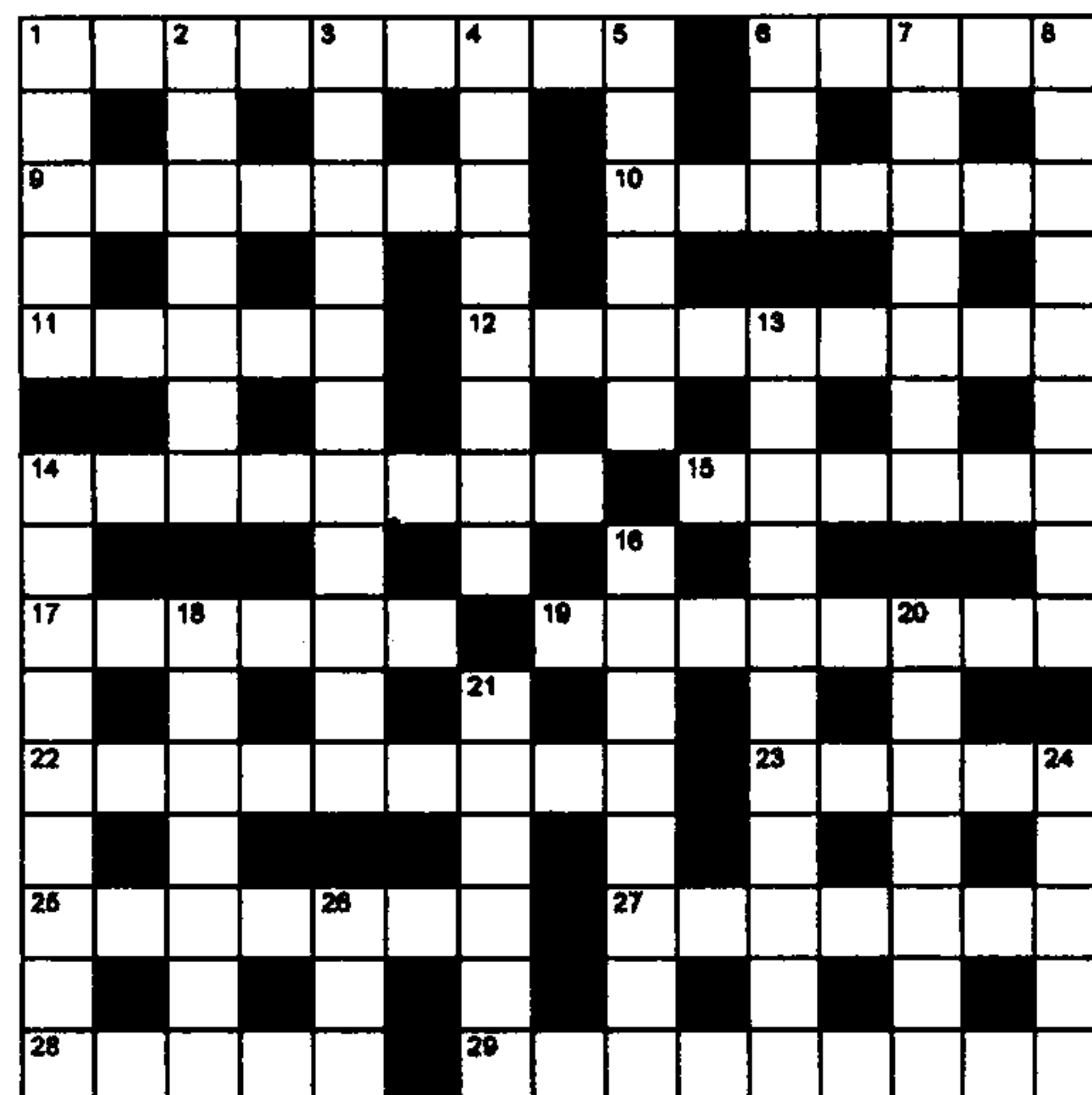
Buble, accompanied by his dog, “Lady Buble,” was speaking in opposition to bill LD 1283, which would make it a felony to have sexual intercourse with an animal (something that is currently not illegal in Maine, or in twenty-four other US states). He argued that “this law is an attempt to force morality onto a minority. It would keep zoo couples from coming out of the closet, and drive us deeper underground, or make us move to other states. If it's legal for two animals to have sexual relations, then why not a human and an animal?”

But Senator Lloyd P. LaFountain III, who had sponsored the bill, rejected Buble's arguments, referring to “troubling stories which are too perverse to share.” His concerns were echoed by Deborah Clark of the National Federation of Humane Societies, who told the committee of “cats destroyed by internal organ damage, and of dogs and cows damaged by human sexual abuse, all for the gratification of disgusting, retch-inducing, perverted scum.” (*Bangor Daily News [Maine]*, 27/3/01. Spotter: David Pinto-Duschinsky)

EYE CROSSWORD 183

by Cyclops

£100 prize



ACROSS

- 1 Withdraw Conservative member (blue) (5,4)
- 6/9/19 Do everything to ensure each ageing rocker gets the spin treatment (5,2,5,8)
- 10 Piss artist, for instance, backing the House of Lords (7)
- 11 Rogue minister runs inside (5)
- 12 Yes, interest lacking in a Daily Mail pisspoor 'key' leader (5,4)
- 14/25 Title's definitive foul language has been the undoing of many a featured celeb (3,5,2,5)
- 15 Loveable arsehole, Archer (as called), at heart (6)
- 17 A hotel in Bristol and Cyclops Island (6)
- 19 See 6
- 22 Assassinated democrat, centre of 'knoll' procession (9)
- 23 Band *Oasis* centre on drug experience (5)
- 25 See 14
- 27 Having an erection after *Wilt*, the film (3,4)
- 28 Present arse, with love, to wife (5)
- 29 Tars collectively e.g. Prince Edward with any vice possibly (5,4)

DOWN

- 1 City gutted over Brown – “endless scoffer” (5)
- 2 Heroin's dodgy when not out at sea (7)
- 3 Halter to restrain tits is an excellent seller (11)
- 4 Too much snow possibly finished parties to a point (8)
- 5 Terrible destructive agent caused by China's infiltration of Vietnam, according to US (6)
- 6 A time to desert the Labour leader in general (3)
- 7 The language when one gets to stuff Bill holding one! (7)
- 8 Visually challenged, that's us, as knitting wool is (9)
- 13 Briefly, penetrating a testicle's agony (2,1,8)
- 14 Transport politician has nothing on the French phallic symbol (5,4)
- 16 As the sun rises ... always a Sir Robin? (4,1,3)
- 18 Went in for bondage, though married? (7)
- 20 Grunge group in a perfect state (7)
- 21 What Blair represents: a new Balfour? F-off! (6)
- 24 Stout Party leader upset party getting homosexual one removed (5)
- 26 Act as cattle brought down (3)

£100 prize to first solution opened on 25.5.01. Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN.

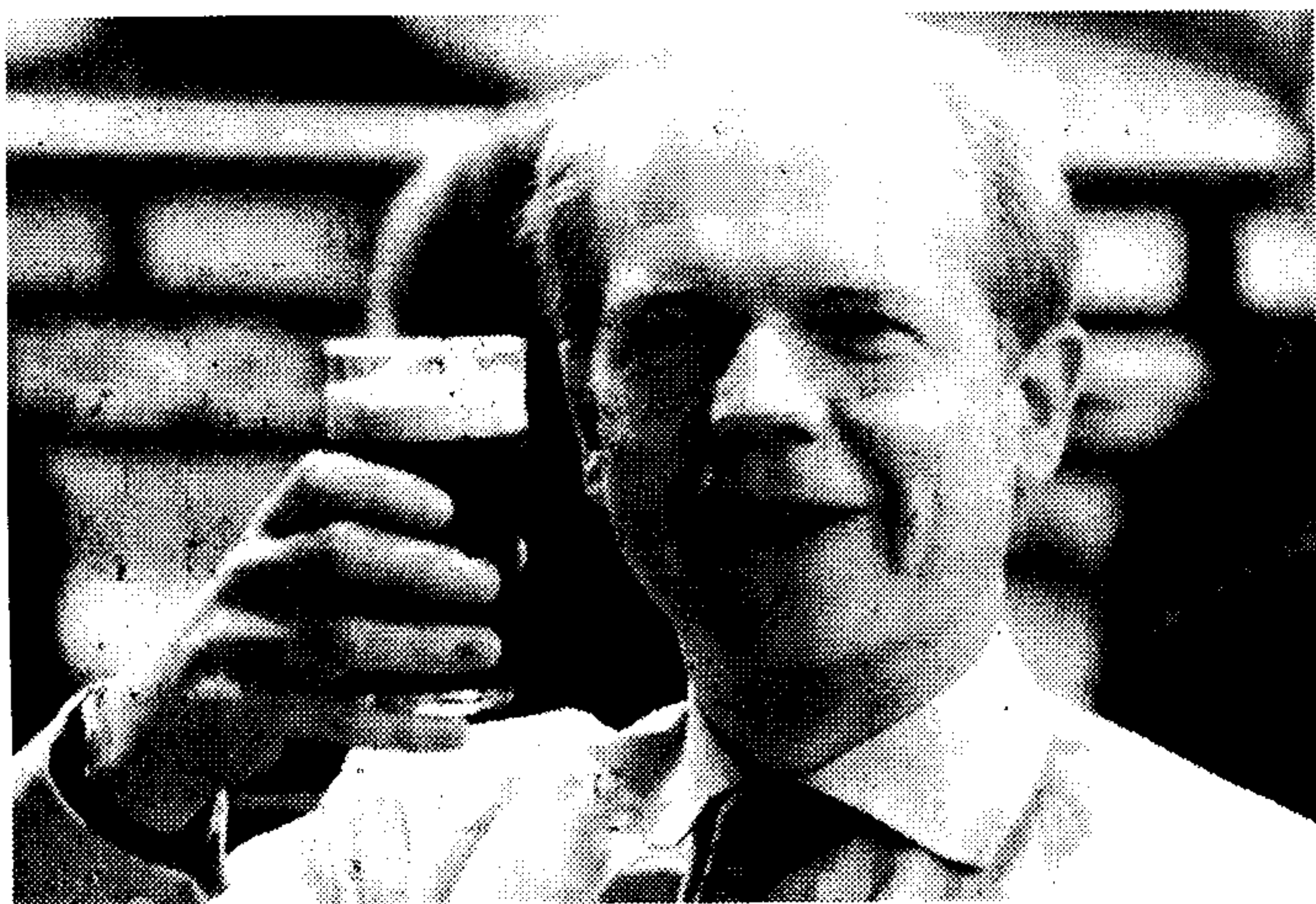
Solution to Crossword No. 182

Winner: BRIAN THOMAS

ACROSS: 1 Chess 4 Milosevic 9 Big-head 10 Balance 13 Heifer 14 Couperin 17 Regicide 19 Knacks 22 Whippersnapper 25 Recalls 26 Pairing 27 Destroyer 28/11 Young British Artists.

DOWN: 1 Cuba 2 Engorging 3 Sceptre 4 Medusa 5 Labrador 6 Split up 7 Venus 8 Cheesiness 12 Third world 15 Richelieu 16 I dare say 18 Cupolar 20 Nippily 21 Sniper 23 Incas 24 Agog.

GERI HALLIWELL'S FILM GUIDE: A SAMPLE					
a p p a r e n t l y	BY MIKE BARFIELD	THE THIN MAN	BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S	SILENCE OF THE LAMBS	SPICEWORLD: THE MOVIE
	A classic mystery: how did he get that way? What are his diet secrets?	Best avoided. Start the day with a fag instead, girls. (0 cals.)	A genuinely scary film. Liver and red wine – how many calories is that?	Film so mindless it makes you want to throw up. Excellent! My fave film!	



NEW TORY DEFECTOR

by Our Political Staff **Phil Pockets**

A SENIOR Conservative MP dramatically switched allegiance last night and joined the Labour Party just weeks before the General Election.

The previously unheard of Conservative is a Mr William Hague, 40, a former drinks delivery man who has had an undistinguished career in the back room of the Conservative Party. He is credited with being the architect of John Major's record defeat and his defection would be a real coup for the Conservative Party.

Said a spokesman, Mr Michael Plotillo, "This is great news for the party. I am sure now that we can go on to win."

Mr Hague meanwhile defended his decision, "I have always considered myself a natural Blairite, ie a right-wing free marketeer in the mould of Mrs Thatcher."

Sean Woodward is very rich.

EYE SPORT

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Plus **Sally Jockstrap's** view from the dug-out.

● **Sally Jockstrap's** view from the ringside.

AND

Sally Jockstrap's view from her office as she downloads PA sports reports from the internet in a desperate attempt to fill the supplement.

All this and nothing else in your daily "Eye Sport" – the indispensable supplement to leave on the train.

Those Italian Election Results in full

Mussolini North

Silvio Sleazoni (Vota Formi) 746,378 lira; Don Corleoni Mafiosi (Cosa Nostra Democratic Christian alliance) 878,442 lira; Luigi Corruptione (Payola Scandale Party)

1,756,437 lira; Captain Corelli (Mandolini Party) 0 votes.

Berlusconi gain by 6 channels

LATE NEWS

Berlusconi faces new charges

Never Too Old...

by **Sylvie Krin**

THE STORY SO FAR: Billionaire media mogul Rupert Murdoch has married the willowy almond-eyed prawn cracker of the East, Wendy Deng, but his children from the first Mrs Murdoch have always looked down on the amber goddess from the land of pot noodles.

Now read on...

IT was 4 o'clock in the morning as a summer dawn broke over the Manhattan skyline. On the 94th floor of the Perry Como building an old man shuffled reluctantly from his bedroom to a Redgrave and Pinsent Olympic standard rowing machine, an 87th birthday present from his fragrant oriental wifette.

"I've set it for 3 hours uphill rapids," she cooed lovingly from her boudoir three floors away. "Chop, chop, Lupert. I'll come and see you later if you're still alive. Just joking, ha ha ha!"

The morning seemed to last an eternity as the proud tycoon struggled to put on his designer tracksuit and began his punishing daily regime. As the hours ticked slowly away, he cast his mind back to that rare night of passion in September when, for a few fleeting moments, Wendy had made him feel a young man again.

Just like all those years ago in the outback when he rode a kangaroo from the sheep station at Diggery Doo to old Rolf's Abbo's Armpit Club in dusty Alice Thompson. Happy days then when, as a virile, carefree young jackaroo he had wanged



his donger and watched the Sheilas' eyes pop with pleasure...

"Lupert! What you do dreaming? No slacking!" The shrill voice of the sultry beauty from Beijing interrupted his reverie as she hit him playfully with a copy of the New South Wales Courier and Argus.

"Look! It says here I have bun in oven. What this mean?"

"Well, darling," wheezed the global media magnate, as the perspiration poured down his wrinkled cheeks, "it means that when you cough out the little feller, he gets a big slice of his daddy's dosheroo."

"I don't get it, Lupert," she cried.

"That's right, my little fortune-hunting cookie," he spluttered. "The little bugger gets all the money. Mind you, I'd have to croak first."

Wendy's beautiful eyes narrowed inscrutably and her hand moved to the setting on the rowing machine marked "Dangerous. Not suitable for rich old men."

(To be continued...)

WARNING



If any schoolchildren spot this stranger coming to their school, they must report him to the authorities at once. He only wants to hang around children to gratify his own desires.



"The judge said he could leave the court with his head held high"

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

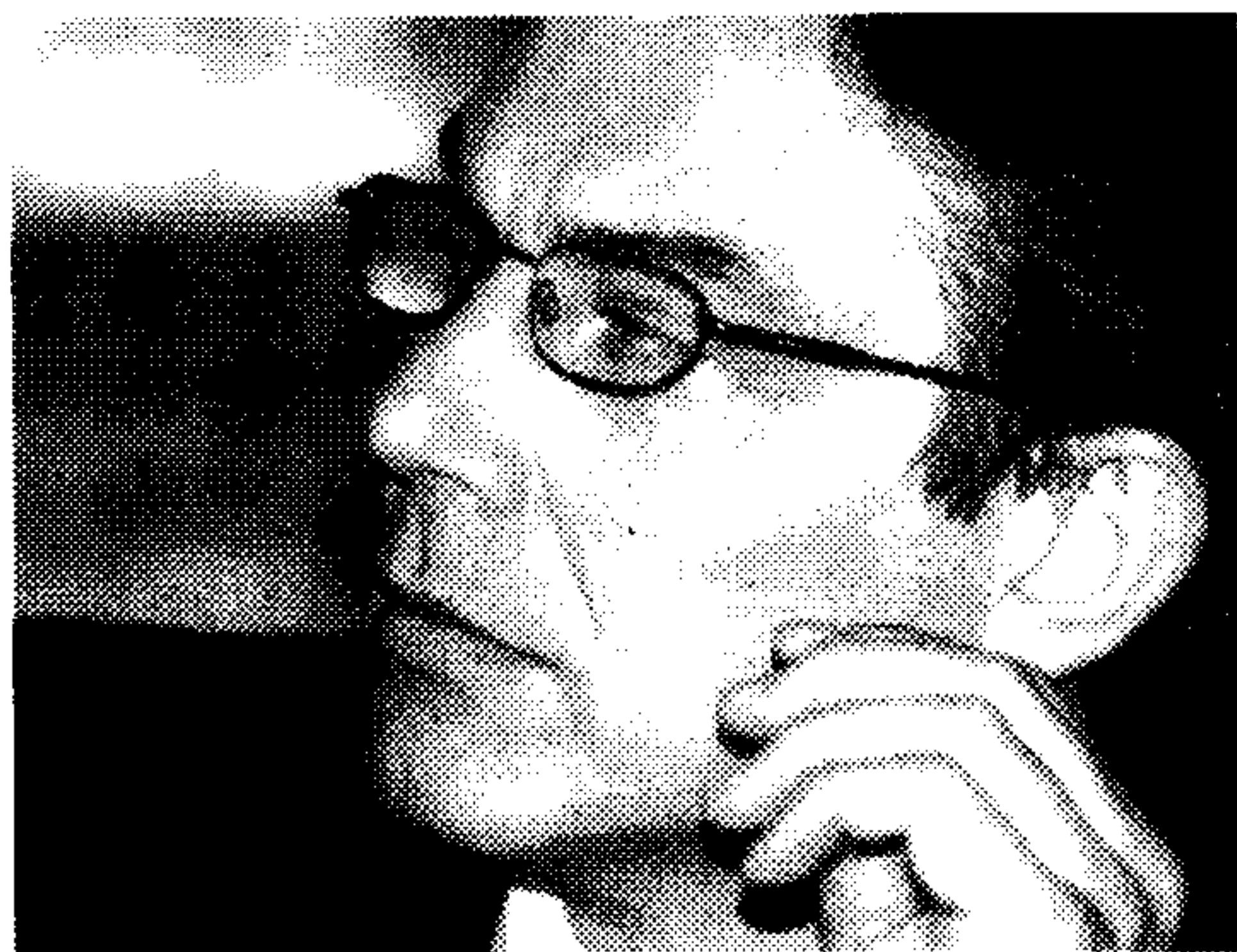
Hullo!

Well, there's only one thing any of us have on our minds at the moment! And that's your vicar's new spectacles!

Wherever I go in the parish, they say to me, "Goodness, Vicar, they make you look so much wiser!"

But, you know, spectacles aren't just for looking wise! They're for seeing clearly! And that's what it's all about!

Vision. Focus. Vision. And the greatest of these three is Vision.



As it says in the great *Letter of St Paul to the Electors of Corinth*, "I used to see through my glasses darkly. But now I see everything really clearly."

And that's my text as we go into this testing time of our PCC elections.

Of course, I have every confidence that you will all show your support for the present team running the parish.

I honestly don't think any group of men (and women!) could have done a better job than the team I picked four years ago (with, of course, one or two exceptions! Mr Davies, Mr Mandelson, Mr Michael, Mr Robinson, Mr Mandelson again, Mrs Mowlam and a few others may know who I'm thinking of!).

So it was in a spirit of real humility that last week I decided to take over our St Albion's Girls School for the day to brief the children and selected members of the local media on what a great job we at St Albion's have been doing!

The reason why Mr Campbell and I had chosen our local school as the best place to put over our message was not an accident.

After all, these children "are the most important people in the parish" (apart from our local journalists, of course!).

As I told them (with the flashbulbs of the St Albion Observer going off in my face!), "You are the future – and so am I!"

And that was a message they really appreciated! As one young girl said to me, "We're so glad you came today, Vicar, because if you hadn't we'd have had to be doing double maths."

I was very moved by this, and by the



girls' reaction to my whole speech. The way they sat there with their eyes closed, while I told them about public-private partnerships and our longterm investment programme, showed how hard they were all concentrating!

And at the end they were all completely silent (until Mr Campbell reminded them that they should show their appreciation by clapping!).

We all then stood up and sang a new chorus which Mr Campbell had chosen for the occasion from the BBC's new song book *Hymns Modern and Modern*, and I accompanied it on my Stratocaster just to make the kids feel it was relevant to them in a very real way!

I also took my jacket off, which might have been a bit much for the headmistress, but just because I'm a vicar, it doesn't mean to say I'm not cool, and the kids went wild!

Anyway, here are the words of that hymn and I hope we will be hearing a lot more of it in the weeks to come:

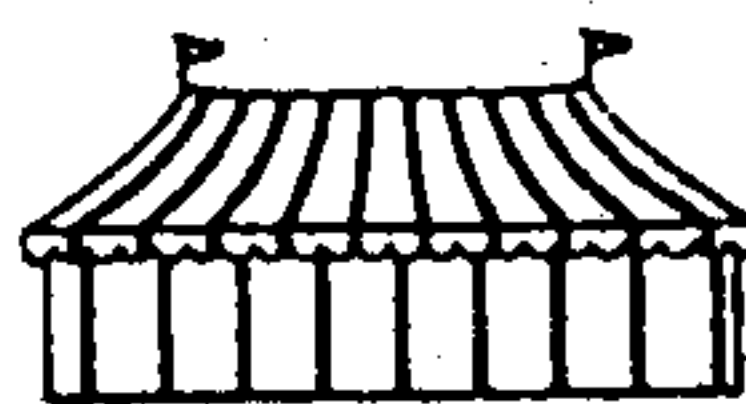
*"We are the voters of the future,
We are the children of today,
We are the leaders of tomorrow,
We're travelling the third way."*

(Repeat)

Yours (with a big X!)

Tony

Millennium Tent Update



Just because everyone's attention is now naturally taken up with other matters (Mr Falconer writes) that doesn't mean that we should forget our urgent need to dispose of what is left of the Millennium Tent. The foxes who were formerly living in the IT Zone have been replaced by a family of Kosovar asylum-seekers who have turned it into a Doner Kebab stall. Obviously this has added to the difficulty of selling the Tent, but prospective purchasers are reminded that this is still a wonderful bargain at 10p.

The Work Goes On – TONY'S FIVE PLEDGES

JUNE 7 is going to be a very big day for us all, when we renew those all-important vows we made four years ago.

That's why I want to add five more solemn commitments to the ones we made then (what you might call "Tony's 10 Commitments"!). So here are our new pledges:

We hereby promise:

1. that we will not promise to do anything that we cannot be sure of delivering.
2. that we will not deliver anything that we haven't promised and vice versa.
3. that if there is anything we have promised that has not yet been fully delivered, we shall promise it again in the hope that nobody notices.

Unfortunately, Mr Campbell tells me that there is not enough room on this page for me to include my remaining pledges, but I PROMISE that I will try to find space for them in our next edition, provided that more important items do not have to take precedence. T.B.



To Remember In Your Prayers

■ Mr Vaz, who is still unfortunately suffering from his mystery illness. We all pray that he is able to spend his time over the next few weeks in complete peace and seclusion and that when he is fully recovered he will soon find a new job. T.B.

THE VICAR'S BACK!!!

Tony returns from a long weekend in the country ready to take on the responsibilities of the modern vicar.

"You are the rock and roll on which I shall build my church" (*Book of Levi-ticus, 17.3*)





PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(Han-z-z-z-ard)

Final Session of Parliament Before Government Returns For Second Term

3.17pm Prime Minister's Questions

Patsy Jacket (Waitrose East, Lab): Does Tony, I mean the Prime Minister, sorry Tony, do you agree that you have done so spectacularly well in the last four years that there's really no need to have another election ever again?

(Labour cheers)

Rt. Hon. Tony Blair: Well, Patsy, er, I really think it's important not to get too complacent about this. I mean, I know we're going to win, but some of the public might like to feel that they are part of the process, and I think that's very important.

Karen Laptop (Tesco North, Lab): Could I just say how much I agree with Patsy, and that it's wonderful that everyone's got another chance to show how much they love Tony and support everything he's doing?

Tony Blair (reading from notes): I would like to point out that, in real terms, the percentage increase in fundholding support initiatives across the regions has risen by 56 percent, which is 27 percent more than anything achieved by the party opposite during their 18 years of sleaze, incompetence and boom-and-bust.

(Tories cries of "Answer! Answer!")

The Speaker (Hon. Jimmy Gorbals MP): Order, order, order the noo!

Blair: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for that eloquent and helpful contribution. I'm so glad I gave you the job.

Speaker: The Rt. Hon. Leader of the Opposition, Wee Wullie Hague.

William Hague (Boddington, Con): Would the Prime Minister not agree that he's been not so much running the country for the last four years, but ruining it?

(Tory laughter and cheers)

Furthermore, Mr Speaker, would it not be true to say that the Prime Minister's record is so bad that it would sell fewer copies than one by Miss Geri Halliwell?

(Hysterical laughter from Tory Benches, except Mr Portillo. Cries from older members of "Who is Geri Halliwell?")

It's the way I tell 'em! And here's another one! This bloke goes into a pub and says, "14 pints of best Yorkshire ale, please." And the barman says, "You look as if you've had enough." And the man says, "You're right there, I've had enough of Tony Blair - which is why I need to drink so much!"

(Tories pass out in paroxysms of unstoppable mirth)

Mr Blair: I don't know how the Rt. Hon. gentleman has got the nerve to stand there cracking jokes when his government was responsible for 18 years of sleaze, incompetence and boom-and-bust.

Mr Hague: Would the prime minister agree that his letters to the Hinduja brothers...

Mr Speaker: You shut your face, laddie. We dinnae want that sort of talk in here. I now call on the Rt. Hon. Edward Heath, the Father of the House, to reminisce for several hours about his 51 years as an ornament of this House.

Rt. Hon. Edward Heath (Beijing, Con): Hullo. I am delighted to see so many of you have come along to pay your respects to the greatest parliamentarian of this or any other generation. Namely myself. Not since the days of Pitt the Grocer has there been a more redoubtable champion of the rights of this chamber, which is why I thought it was only right to give away its powers to the unelected Commission in Brussels. I am sure that history will recognise that I was right, and that all my successors were completely wrong, on this and all other matters. I will not deign to mention the name of Mrs Thatcher, the most disastrous prime minister of all time. And while I am about it, as a loyal Conservative, I would like to say that I hope no one will be foolish enough to vote for this pathetic little right-wing extremist who is now passing himself off as the leader of a party which was once in happier times fortunate enough to be led by such eminent statesmen as myself.

(Cries from Tories of "Bring back Maggie!" "Bring back Major!", "Bring back anyone!")

Speaker: Are there any other Members who would like to offer a wee word or twa afore they gang?

Rt. Hon. Tony Benn (Teabag, Lab): Mishta Shpeaker, itsh not only my very good friend Ted who feels utterly betrayed by his Party. I would jusht like to shay how much I hate everything that thish New Labour government standsh for, and as for Mr Blair...

Speaker: That's quite enough from you too, laddie. Yer time's up.

Mr Paddy Ashtray (Pantsdown, Lib Dem): Since I am also leaving this House, may I just take this opportunity to attack Charles Kennedy. He must be the worst leader of the Lib Dems since the last one, whose name everyone has forgotten...

(House empties as MPs try to remember where their constituencies are)

HEATH'S PRIVATE VIEW



What You Won't Read In The Sun This Week



Friday, May 24, 2001

30p

YES, HE'S GOING HOME

by Our Entire Staff

AT LAST, thanks to your No. 1 Sun, one of the world's most notorious villains has been put on a plane and sent back home to face the music, following a lifetime on the run, living off his ill-gotten gains.

Rupert Murdoch, who's somehow managed to avoid being collared by the world's tax inspectors, has been committing daylight robbery in almost every country he's visited over the last five decades. For years

the old lag enjoyed the high life – if he wasn't cavorting with an exotic Asian beauty on the beach, he was entertaining the great and good in one of his many palatial residences.

But enough is enough – justice must prevail. Mr Murdoch must know it's time he was sent back to Australia to suffer the consequences of his many crimes, the worst of which must surely be flying Ronnie Biggs back to England in a disgraceful attempt to rip off the British taxpayer.

NO, HE'S NOT COMING HOME

by Our Entire Staff

JACK MILLS, the train driver involved in the Great Train Robbery, has stunned no one this week by not returning to Britain.

The Sun has attempted to entice him back home to Blighty from the Afterlife – a haven for people who've

been coshed over the head by criminals – to no avail.

"He seems strangely reluctant to share a pint of beer in a pub in Margate or fish and chips on the pier with Ronnie Biggs, but we think he's holding out for money," said a bemused senior Sun (cont. p. 94)



The Great Brain Robber

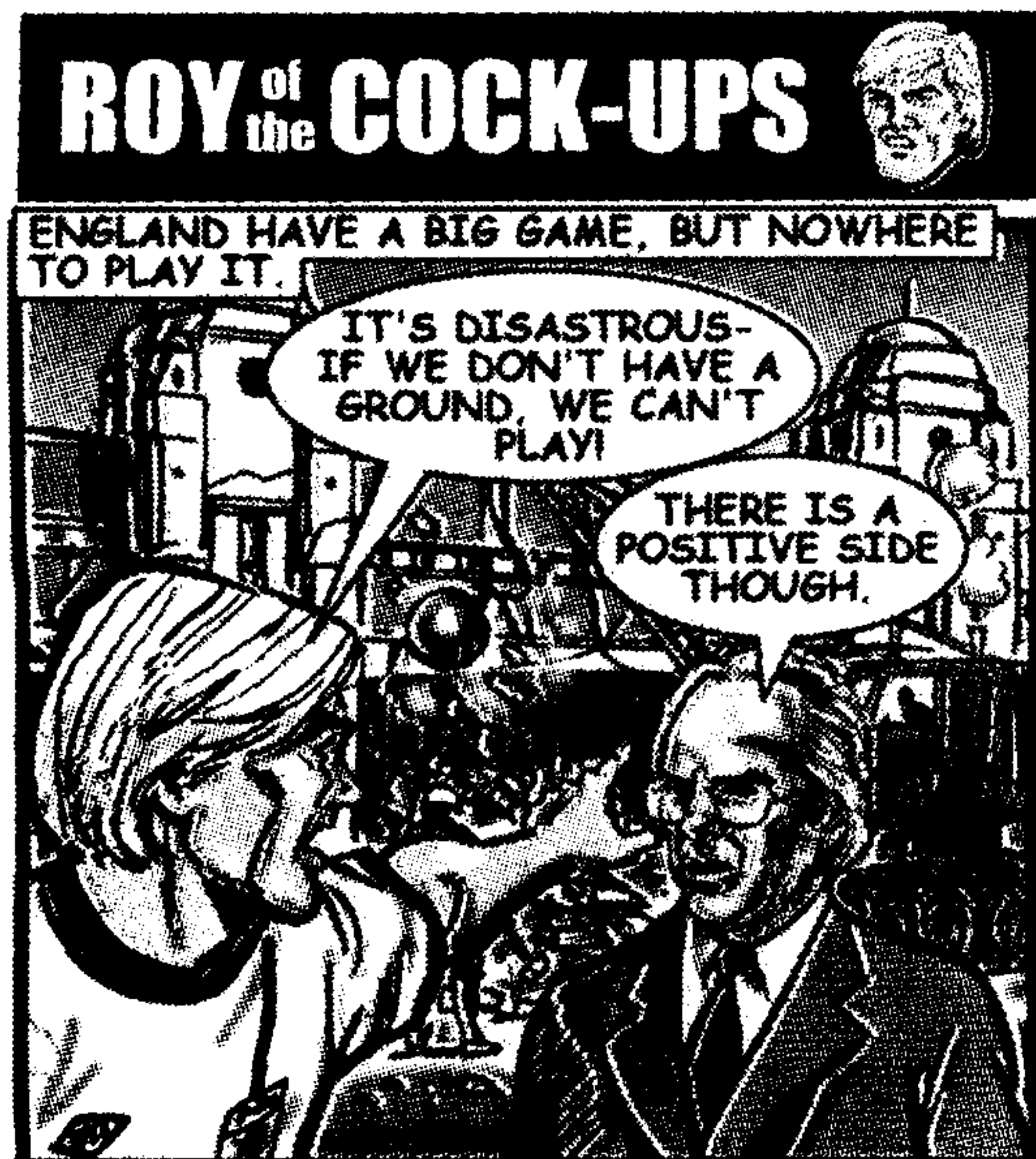
The Sun Apology

In recent months, in common with all other right-wing newspapers, we may have given the mistaken impression that criminals are nothing more than scum with evil in their hearts, whose arrogant flouting of the law of the land means they deserve to be shot in the back rather than being lavished with free gifts and air travel endorsed by bleeding heart broadsheet press.

We now realise, in the light of us organising Ronnie Biggs's return to Britain, that criminals are in fact cheeky chappies with a song in their heart whose audacious flouting of the law of the land means they deserve a pat on the back and to be lavished with gifts of air travel and of £20,000 by your bleedin' brilliant super soaraway Sun.

We apologise for any confusion caused, and by any confusion caused in the future when we change our minds after the next young thug is rewarded with trainers and CDs, and we change it back again after we track down Lord Lucan.

PLUS: Dirty Old Digger Gets Young Asian Babe up the Duff! Hundreds of Sexy Pix!!

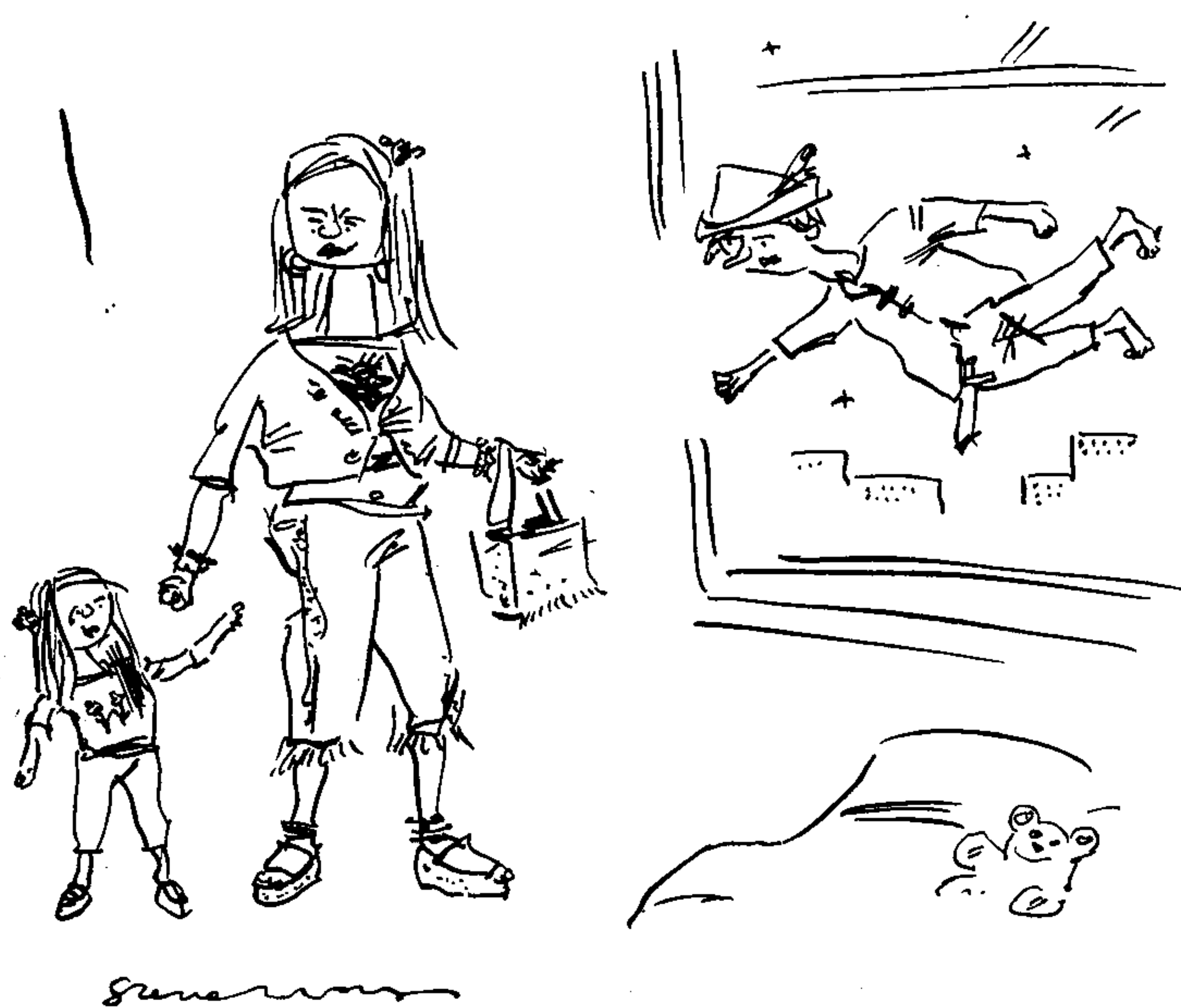


LATE NEWS

Ronald Biggs's Sun breaks down in press conference

THE Sun newspaper today collapsed in an emotional heap of drivel at the news that no one cared about Ronnie Biggs.

Sobbing uncontrollably, the Sun, who had accompanied Ronnie Biggs from Rio and stayed at his side throughout the flight, said, "It's terrible. We're a sick newspaper. We're incoherent and mentally ill. All we wanted was a decent front page story. Now we find that the public want to lock us up and throw away the key."



"Peter... Can my Mummy come? She hasn't grown up yet too..."

THE DAILY MERLIN

CAMELOT TURN COUPLE DOWN

by Our Lottery Staff Piers Morgan La Fay

IN A disgraceful act of meanness, the officials at Camelot have refused to allow a couple of knights to join the Round Table because they "could not find" the Holy Grail.

"We are gutted," said Sir Hector. "Sir Bors and I have turned the country upside down trying to find

our ticket to salvation, but we've just mislaid it - probably down the back of the sofa or in the launderette."

LANCELOTTERY

A Camelot spokesman, Arthur, 47, said, "It is a shame, but the rules are very strict. Just because they claim to have found the Holy Grail does not mean we have to admit them to the elite group of winners."

On Other Pages • Should Sir Richard run Camelot instead? 2 • Arthur and Guinevere: "We're so happy together" 3 • Unfunny illuminated manuscript by Thomas Johnson 94

Why I am giving up joking

by World-Famous *Times* Columnist ALAN COREN

ALAN, you're joking too much. You must give up or it will be the death of you."

So quoth the delightful Cricklewood quack in whose consulting room I spent a nerve-racking half-hour the other Tuesday (or was it Wednesday? That's the trouble when you give up joking, your memory goes).

"I can't give up joking," I replied plaintive-wise. "How can I possibly write my weekly column for the *Times* without a single joke?"

"Well" quipped the stern-faced sawbones, "I think (contd. p. 94)

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam Ted Rogers, Quiz Show Host

So. Farewell then Ted Rogers.

3-2-1.

Yes, that Was your Catchphrase.

And you did That funny thing With your hand.

3-2-1.

Now, sadly, you Are in the Dustybin Of History.

E.J. Thribb
(3-2-17½)

MAN WITH RED HAIR MARRIES YOUNG GIRL

by PHIL FRONT-PAGE

A MAN with red hair yesterday got married to a young girl in America.

The couple were said afterwards to be "very happy".

© The Daily Billiegraph

MAN AND WOMAN ON TELLY GET ANOTHER JOB

by PHIL RESTOFFPAPER

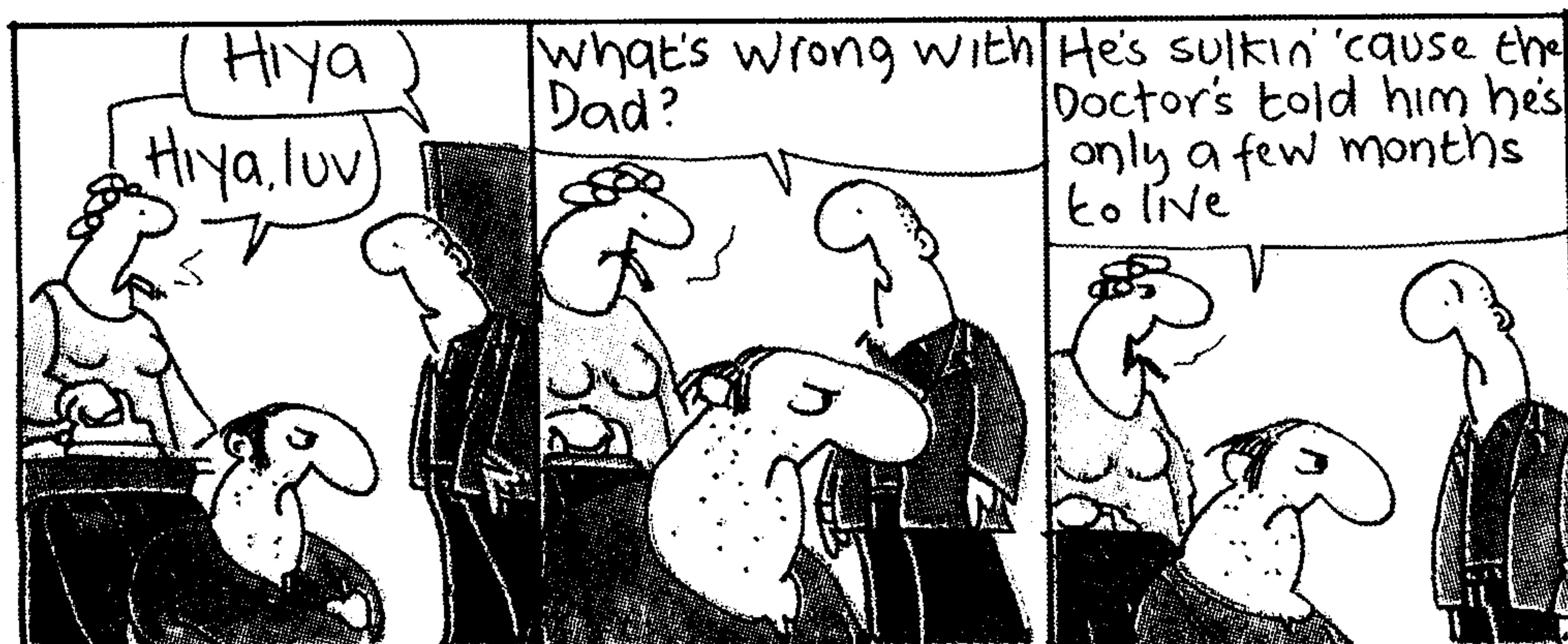
A MAN and a woman who are on the telly yesterday announced that they've been offered a job on the other side.

and the woman said: "You'll still be able to watch them, although you must remember to change channels in order to do so."

A close friend of the man © The Daily Tellygraph



HUSBAND



In an interview in yesterday's Sun newspaper, Biggs, who has suffered three strokes, cannot talk and is in debt, said he did not want to end his life as a fugitive.

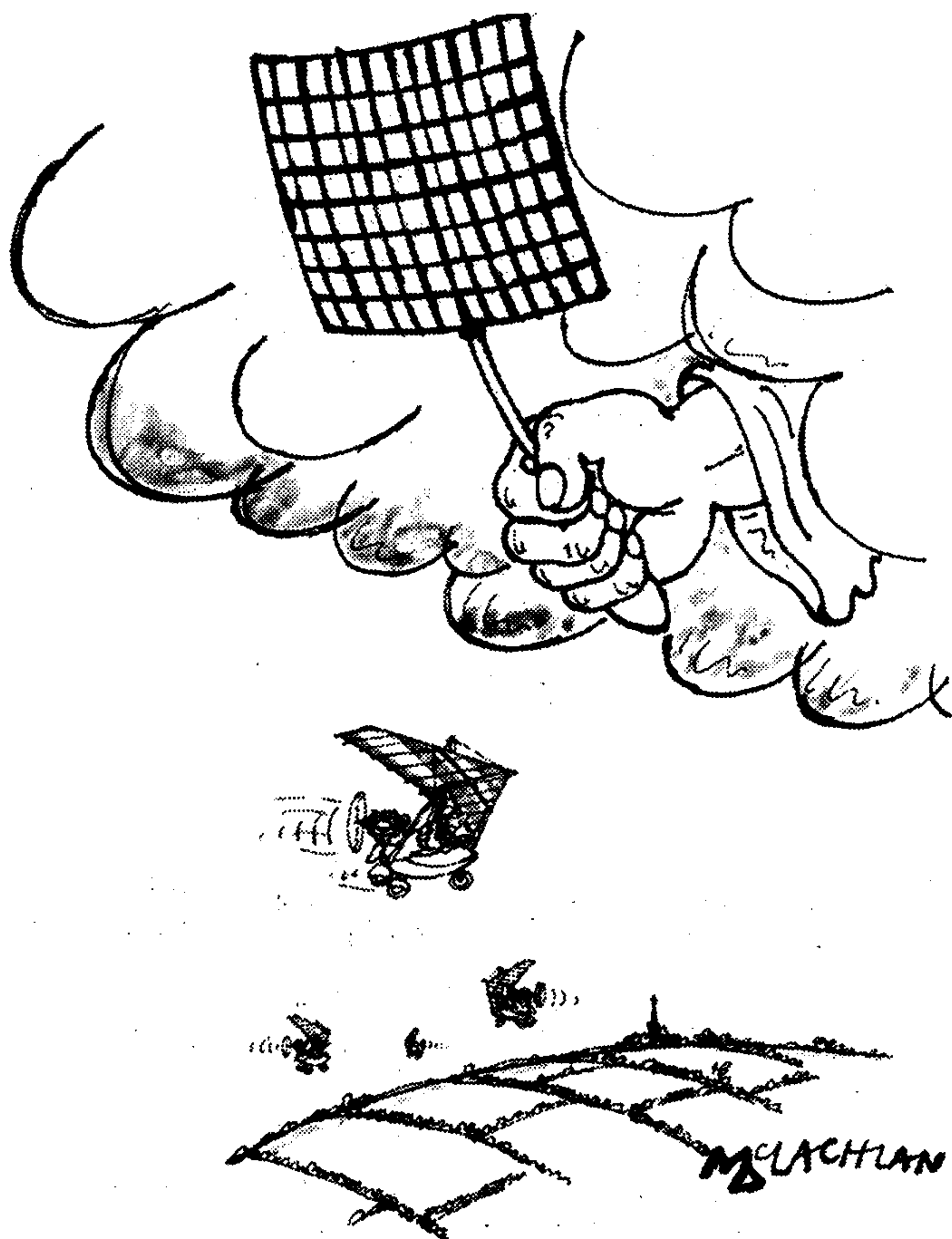
Grauniad

34. BUYUNG HAY
/Crap omelette

Menu card, Java

Mr Townend, who has insisted that he will not be silenced, refused to comment.

The Times



DANDO MAN 'DEFINITELY GUILTY'

by Our Crime Staff E. Dunnit

THE PROSECUTION in the Dando murder trial today produced the final conclusive piece of evidence which will nail Britain's most hated killer to the tragic death of the most popular TV personality in history.

The courtroom hushed as the jury were asked to "look very closely indeed" at a tiny particle of household dust, barely one-billionth of a millimetre long.

PARTICLE OF FAITH

"It is on this microspeck of domestic detritus," said Inspector 'Knacker of the Yard' Knacker, "that the whole of our case against the killer rests."

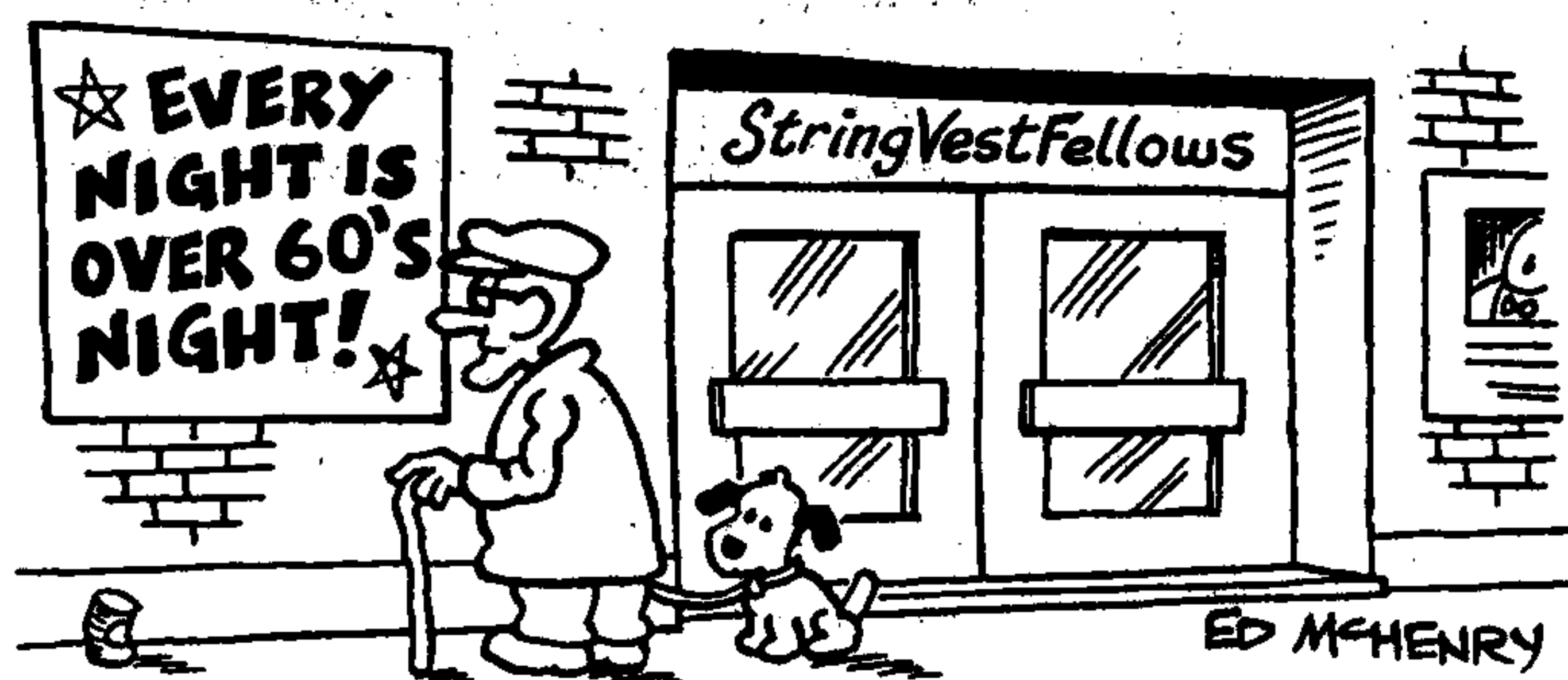
The court then heard evidence

from forensic experts that the piece of dust found on the sole of the accused's shoe was "of exactly the same type, more or less" as dust found on a pavement close to the murdered TV star's West London home.

"I think you will agree," the inspector told the jury, "that finding this key piece of dust is as good as putting a noose around the guilty man's neck."

DUST PROOF

The press gallery, packed with fearless and unbiased investigative reporters, burst into spontaneous applause as the journalists began tapping into their laptops headlines such as "DANDO MAN 'DEFINITELY GUILTY'". (To be continued.)



Friday, May 18, 2001

Labour's Poll Lead Collapses

'We could win' says Ancram

BY OUR POLITICAL STAFF
GEORGE MAKENOJONESABOUTIT

Exclusive

IN AN astonishing twist to what is becoming one of the closest-fought election battles of recent times, the latest polls are showing the biggest drop in support for Mr Blair since the campaign began.

Tory Central Office was last night said to be "cockahoop" over the new figures, which show Labour plummeting from 54 percent to a mere 51 percent, while support for Mr Hague has soared for the first time to over 30 percent.

As a euphoric Tory Party

Chairman Michael Ancram will say at this morning's press conference, "If this swing is repeated all over the country, we could win at least one seat, although it is too soon to say where that might be."

page 24

page 2



IT'S THE TURN-OFF ELECTION!

Public 'Fed Up', Bored And Apathetic

by Our Political Staff Peter Kelsnore

ALL OVER Britain voters are saying they have "had it up to here" with pieces telling them they are bored with the election.

"Everywhere you look," said one angry Tunbridge Wells housewife, "you see nothing but the same dreary, predictable articles about how the electorate have been switched off politics."

"It's got to the point where I can't be bothered to read another word about how apathetic I am."

THE BIG SLEEP

"There is a real danger," experts are predicting, "that over the next four weeks there will be no one left in the country prepared

to read pieces about low voter turnout, even if they are written by such leading stars as Polly Toynbee, Simon Heffer, William Rees-Mogg, David Dimbleby, Simon Jenkins or Anatole Kaletsky."

But editors are determined to prove the public wrong. That is why they are planning to extend their coverage of how dull the election is by anything up to 100 pages an issue.

"Even if people aren't yet as bored by the election as we say they are," said TV's Charles Moore, editor of the Daily Torydownward-graph, "then they certainly will be when they have read another 3000 pieces on the subject by Frank Johnson."

THE EYE'S TOP TEAM — BRINGING YOU THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE ELECTION COVERAGE EVER

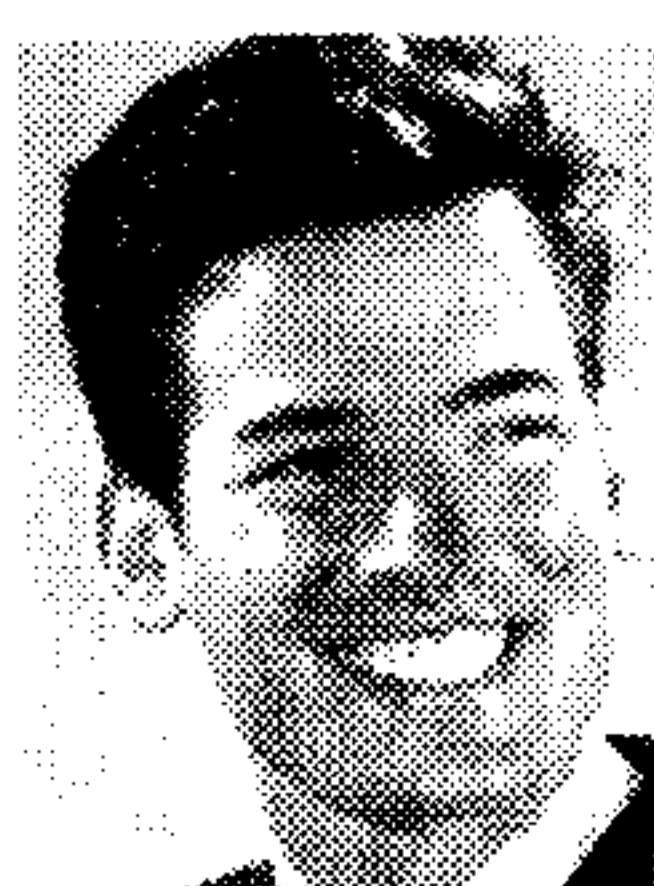
FROM TODAY Private Eye will be running an extra 94 pages every issue to guarantee up-to-the-minute round-the-clock first-past-the-post in-depth behind-the-scenes in-your-face cut-out-and-throw-away reportage of tomorrow's events today.

This is the A-team who will deliver the nation's most indispensable election news before it even happens.



Man with glasses. With over 40 years' experience at the cutting edge, the man with glasses will provide analysis and comment.

Woman you haven't heard of. Reporting from the key marginals, the woman you haven't heard of will write thousands of words about the ups and downs of the campaign trail.



Young bloke. With no experience at all, young bloke will be giving a unique Generation X viewpoint on the issues that concern first-time voters.

Man with bowtie. One of Britain's top psephologists, man with bowtie will be conducting a daily poll of polls to keep you abreast of all the latest percentages.



Someone amusing. With his unique brand of wry humour, someone amusing will be taking a wry sideways look at the lighter moments of the election battle.

Another woman.

To make the team look bigger and more balanced in gender terms, another woman will be getting a picture byline as well.



Alastair Campbell. Top government spokesman Alastair Campbell will be coming up with our stories, writing our

headlines and telling us what to put in the editorials (some mistake surely).

More Top Team tomorrow



"I'm rather worried about levels of stress in the office"



Top stars send their kids to St Cakes

by Our Education Staff **Chris Bighead** and **John Claire-de-Looney**

MORE and more parents are queueing up to get their children into the prestigious Black Country public school which is known as "the Eton of the West Midlands".

Among the showbiz legends who are hoping to enter their offspring to the £36,000-a-term boarding school of St Cakes are rock billionaire Mick Jagger and the world's highest-paid female singer Mrs Madonna Ritchie.

MATERIAL GIRLSCHOOL

The headmaster of St Cakes, Mr R.S.J. Kipling, told reporters yesterday "I cannot possibly comment on private and confidential entrance applications, but off-the-record I can tell you I am thrilled to think that Mick and Maddy, as they have asked me to call them, will soon be appearing at Prizegiving and making speeches about their latest records."

Said Mr Kipling, "We are also delighted to think that two such distinguished role models will be

sending their cheques to St Cakes in the near future."

Could You Pass The St Cakes Entrance Exam?

Time Allowed: 3 Hours.

- ① How much do you think your parents are worth?
 - a) £10 million
 - b) £20 million
 - c) £10 billion
 - ② Will your parents be prepared to appear in the School Prospectus? Yes/No
 - ③ Would your parents like to sponsor our new Music School, the St Cakes Rock 'n' Roll Academy, and be prepared to star in a fund-raising concert for the new headmaster's house? Yes/No
- If all answers are satisfactory, candidates will be admitted to the school at once.

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS

BY BIRCH



THAT LABOUR ELECTION-WINNING STRATEGY IN FULL

1. Call the Election.
2. Remind everyone that William Hague is leader of the Conservative Party.
3. Er... that's it.

Daily Mail

NOT TO BE says SIMON HEFFER

A study published last week makes it only too clear that the world is not a fit place in which to live.

Millionaire asylum seekers of every hue swaggering without a by-your-leave down our ancient British streets.

Self-confessed homosexuals attempting to undo our braces, pull down our plus-fours and sodomise us in full view of our own portraits.

Muggers, murderers, arsonists and multiple rapists appointed to senior positions in the Blair cabinet.

Vicious brute Ronald Biggs treated like a homecoming hero as he leeches off our struggling NHS.

For crying out loud. This is no time to be still breathing.

With the so-called European Court of Human Rights secretly slaughtering anything up to thirty thousand of our war heroes a week, now is the time to do ourselves in.

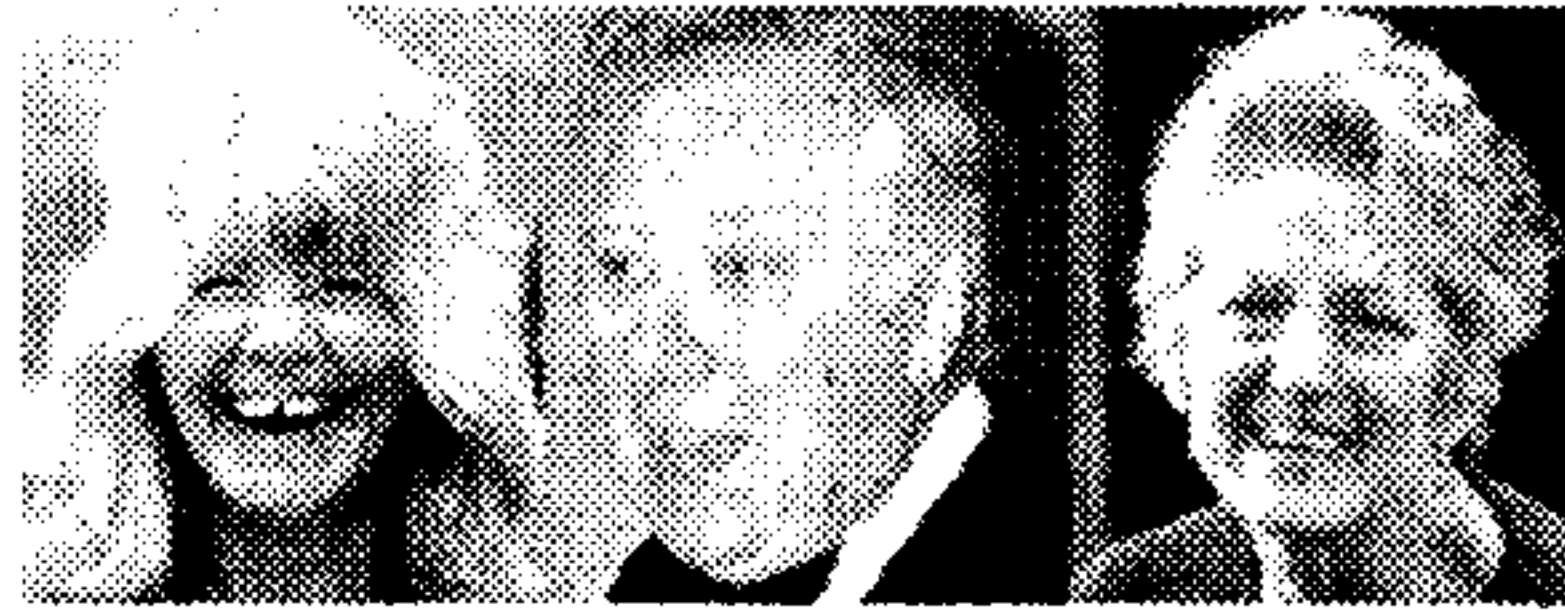
TO BE says HUNTER DAVIES

To be or not to be? Blimey, oh Riley! Big one, that. Sounds like quite a puzzler to me. Ooh-er, what a quessie, as me old nan used to say, bless her cotton socks. The question was first couched in no uncertain terms by the Bard of Avon himself, the bloke in the goatee beard and ladies' tights, if you will. No doubt old William Shakey was a bit down in the dumps when he asked it, just like my old mate John Lennon used to be. There's another genius for you. But he's dead now. Boo-hoo. Not a pleasant business, death. Did I tell you about John Lennon, did I? Best mates. Great bloke. Totally natural. Down to earth. But to return to the aforementioned question – smacky, smacky for straying off the point, Hunter! – it's got to be said that, all in all, given a bit of give and take, I come down on the side of To Be. It's not 'alf bad, life. When all's said. And done. Honest. Ta-ra.

NOT TO BE says GERMAINE GREER

What the hell is happening to us as a society, might I ask? I mean, we're living through one of the most DISTURBING periods of the 21st century and – crikey almighty! – we're still only eighteen months into it, and that truly TERRIFIES me. There are cataclysmic changes happening to our society and nobody

THE GREAT DEBATE TO BE OR NOT TO BE?



but me seems to be REMOTELY AWARE of them.

I mean, will someone PLEASE TELL ME what in God's name are we planning to DO about it, that's what I'd like to know! Look, don't give me that. Yesterday, I went out to teach my hens, right, and one of them FLATLY REFUSED to learn how to miaow – even though she knew darn well I wanted her to be a bloody cat. So could someone please tell me why no one does what you WANT anymore? And don't give me any of that "To Be" crap. I mean, PUH-LEEEAASE! I've been telling them Not To Be these past forty-something years, but do they listen? Like heck they bloody do!

TO BE says JILLY COOPER

It must have been perfectly beastly being gorgeous darling Hamlet. I bet he was hurting dreadfully and feeling very, very miz when he came out with that simply adorable little speech. Every time I hear it, it makes me want to give him a great big huggy and tell the poor little poppet that I don't half fancy him! Toby or not Toby! I'll go for Toby every day – and I haven't got the foggiest who he is! Men!!

NOT TO BE says PHILIP NORMAN

Things were so much better when I was a lad. You could buy a pint of bitter for two bob and a slap-up dinner for five bob, and still have enough change to buy a three-bedroomed maisonette near the park, with money left over for curtains.

These days, it's all different. Take clothes, for instance. The corduroy shorts I wore as a lad no longer fit. The ginger pop I've kept in my bottom drawer these past forty years has gone all flat and yucky. The Beatles haven't made a decent hit record for heaven knows how long. And what's happened to good, old-fashioned

service? These days, there's no one to do your shoelaces up for you when they come undone. Not to be – that is the answer.

TO BE says ROY HATTERSLEY

This humble scrivener can think of a good many reasons to maintain the onward flow of breath through all his main orifices.

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, wrote the poet Wordsworth. And though I take issue with that doughty scribe on a good many topics, I heartily concur with the great Cumbrian wordsmith on that particular subject.

Allow me perchance to list just a handful of the multifarious delights pursuant to the decision To Be.

A brisk walk along the world famous Blackpool Pleasure Beach, chip buttie at the ready – followed by a tram home to your honest-to-goodness B and B.

Feet up, slippers on, curtains drawn, cocoa in hand – and the theme tune of Coronation Street just starting.

The sheer undiluted delight of an old-fashioned Scotch Egg gobbled down on the top of a double-decker bus as it ambles its way gently through my favourite parts of Birmingham. (Incidentally, for sheer devil-may-care enjoyment, Birmingham knocks spots off the undemocratic French Riviera.) And, later the same day, the joy of picking the meaty droppings off your jacket and trousers when you're feeling just that little bit peckish.

The good old British weather: as they say in my part of the country, there's nowt t'beat a right decent shower.

The immortal ditties of Gracie Fields, the Lancashire sparrow who captured the heart of a grateful nation.

To be or not to be? I plump for the former, every time. If you've got your health, what more do you need? There truly are some things money can't buy.

£850 plus VAT, expenses invoice enclosed (6 Chip Butties, 1st Class Return Blackpool, two nights Imperial Hotel Blackpool, 12-pack of Scotch Eggs, new slippers, new television, 1st Class Return and Full Board French Riviera, new suit, new shower unit, complete Gracie Fields CD collection).

As told to
CRAIG BROWN

Celeb

L I G G E R



Literary Review

Morley is less

John G —
**The Authorised Biography
 Of John Gielgud**
 Sheridan Morley
 (Hodder & Stoughton, £20)

TEACHERS are familiar with the lame excuses for failure to hand in homework: hungry dogs, vomiting siblings, sudden power-cuts mysteriously restricted to a single street. None of this can compete, though, with the apologia for tardiness contained in the preface to *John G*, a biography of the late Sir John Gielgud by Sheridan Morley, which may indeed be "authorised" but certainly isn't called for.

Sherry M (to follow his own twee naming procedure) was commissioned in 1989 to memorialise an actor who had already outlived one biographer. It soon emerged that the subject wished publication to be posthumous, but it was widely assumed that Sherry M was writing the book during the 11 years until that became a possibility and would simply call the publisher on the day that the performer's man-servant summoned the undertaker.

Er, no. Sherry M did what all prolix journalists with a distant deadline do: defer. The foreword reveals that composition was also posthumous: "That Sunday night, when I was first told of his death, I began for the first time to write the opening of chapter one, as if somehow I could at last see how to do it and even perhaps keep him with me for a few more months." Some readers may suspect that the author was also galvanised by the realisation that Hodder would be phoning on the Monday morning to ask if it could finally have the manuscript now the old ham was dead.

Unfortunately, the result of this ultimate homework excuse ("Please, miss, I was psychologically incapable of proceeding until released by the subject's death") is that Sherry M had to knock out a 500-page book in a few months. The result is that the biographer, always a rather chatty writer, has here produced a book with all the elegance, revision and reflection of a phone call to order a mini-cab.

Expressions as old and dead as Gielgud lie on every page: "By now, John had completely lost the plot"; "John continued making films as if they were going out of fashion". These link slabs of prose from other biographies, diaries and newspaper articles. Although Morley has 96 years to describe, the reader frequently finds him edging up the daily word count with fatuous extensions to already pointless sentences, as when he notes that his subject once appeared in a version of *Les Misérables*, though "sadly without the songs that have now made

Hugo's novel such a musical triumph all around the world". Say that again? We're supposed to feel regret that a classical actor never played in a West End musical which he could never have appeared in anyway?

The only really fresh material involves Gielgud's arrest in 1953 for an irregular act in the Gents. Sherry M (who really does call his subject "John G" throughout the text) tries to suggest that this incident was central to Gielgud's life; but, when Sir Alec Guinness is also fingered in passing for a similar indiscretion as well as being a "late-life alcoholic", you simply feel that the biographer has an unhealthy interest in outing dead luvvies. It will be for Sherry M's biographer to explain this emphasis one day.

But the fact that the performance of Gielgud's most vividly brought to mind for the reader is one which took place in a public lavatory is not purely the fault of Morley's necrophiliac prurience. Of all biographies, those of actors are the hardest to write because of the sheer difficulty of putting their professional achievements on the page. Reflecting on the invisibility of theatrical achievement, the director Richard Eyre once commented that great stage acting is "written in water". Gielgud reached his peak in a pre-electronic era and thus left very little record of his acting at all.

The life of a writer can be peppered with their texts, but it takes an author of novelistic abilities to bring past performances back to life. Morley, sadly, is a prose stylist in the Jeffrey Archer class.

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

■ ONE of the most embarrassing scenes in the huge box-office hit *Bridget Jones's Diary* is the cameo appearances by authors Salman Rushdie and Jeffrey Archer, in a scene supposedly set at a publishing launch party.

Now it seems that these scenes are proving embarrassing for the makers of the film and not just the audience. When trying to flog *Bridget Jones's Diary* around the world, they have run up against the fact that certain international audiences are not very keen on a man they consider an arch-blasphemer

WHAT YOU DIDN'T MISS PT 94

Eclectic Light by Seamus Hearsay (Faber, £8.99)

An Irish Poet Considers His Good Fortune

Ah, bliss was it to be alive in the bright dawn of nineteen sixty
 To be sure. Where the bright water flowed
 Like silver into the foaming Bann.
 Which is a river. Just down from the hanging tree and the spot where my
 Spalpeen of a grandad cheeked the Black and Tans.
 And Niamh, Aiobheann, Feargal — are you gone from me now? And those girls
 That memory makes fairer.
 In a world where electricity sprang from the switch like a God-granted miracle
 And the Prods hated Devalera.
 Negative ions in the sparkling air, light like a pinioning sabre.
 The slime and the silver of
 The fatted eel, and the money from Faber and Faber.
 From the French of Stephane Mallarmé

(Rushdie, not Archer). It is to be hoped that Working Title will not give in to pressure on this one and will not airbrush out the famous author in his cinematic debut.

■ BACK in the real world of publishing, has the feared recession started to bite at Random House ahead of the rest of the publishing world? Normally, the annual publication of the *Good Pub Guide* would be marked by a party in one of the pubs featured in the book. This year, however, the launch was held in the canteen at the publisher's Vauxhall Bridge Road offices — not noted for its crackling log fires or selection of real ales (Rebuck's Old Peculier, anyone?). Other recent launches in the canteen have included bashes for Dennis Waterman's autobiography *Reminder* and Sebastian Faulks' new novel *On Green Dolphin Street*, a distinct come-down from the Cobden Club, where his last effort Charlotte Gray was toasted. If surefire moneyspinners like Faulks merit only a few glasses of plonk in the RH canteen, what is there for unknowns and new signings — sharing a bottle of cider in the car park?

■ FOLLOWING the startling news that ex-OUP editor Henry Hardy had given a glowing review to Andrew Malcolm's OUP-bashing book *The Remedy* (Eye 1026), it is perhaps time to put out of their misery those who couldn't work out the identity of the editor — unnamed in Hardy's review — who started the whole affair off by promising to publish Malcolm's book, *Making Names*. It was, of course, Hardy himself.

Bookworm is indebted to Dr Iain Stevenson of City University's publishing school, who has pointed out that Hardy's role in the whole debacle is worth two whole pages



in *Publishing Law* by Hugh Jones (Routledge), the book being "required reading for any editor who wants to stay out of trouble a la Hardy".

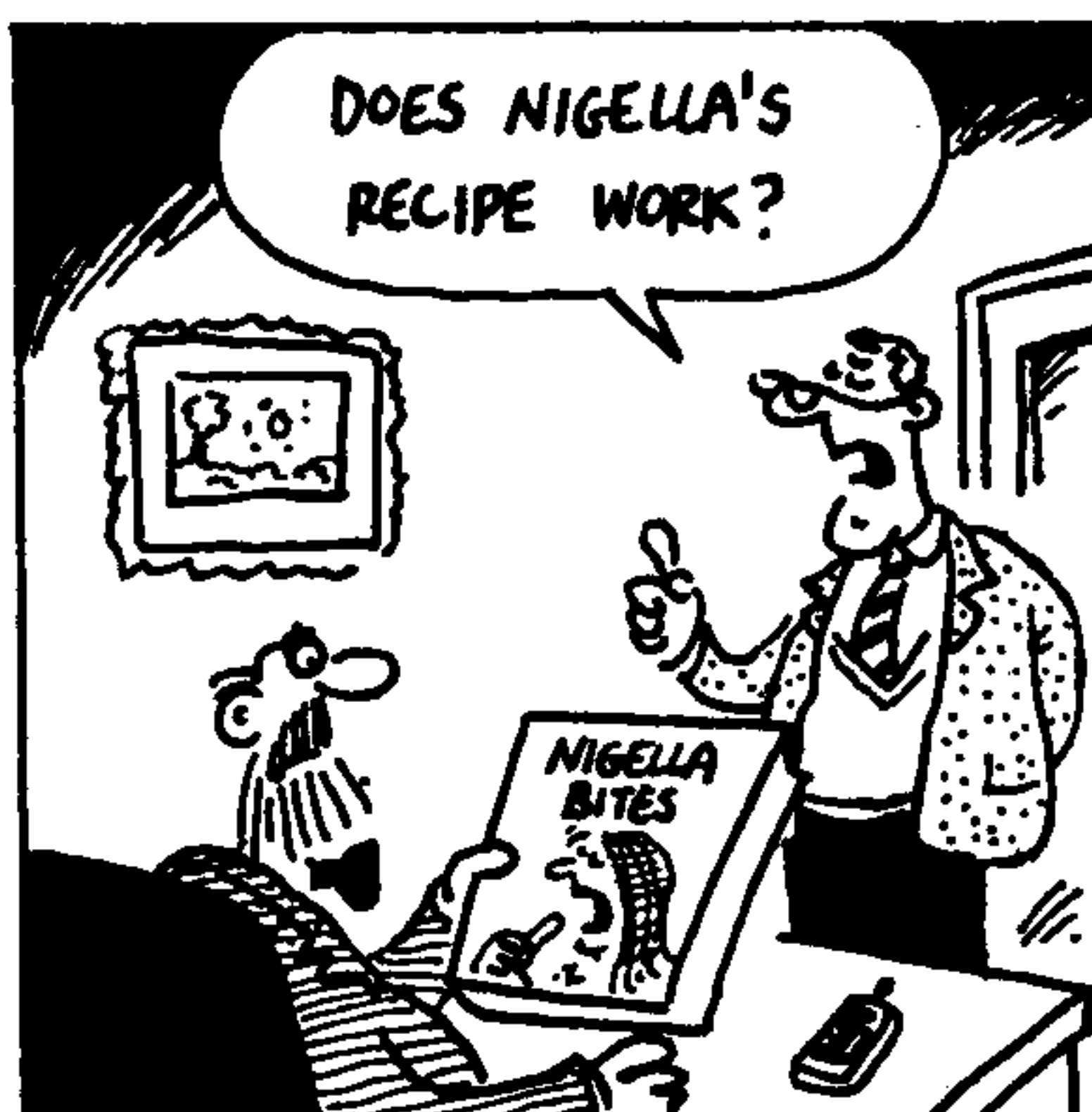
■ THE inevitable has finally happened, with Metro calling in the administrators and filing for a company voluntary arrangement (CVA). (See *Eyes passim*.)

Will any of the 255 individuals and companies who are owed a total of £700,000 see any of their money back?

With the exception of the Inland Revenue, which will receive in full its £65,691, creditors are set to receive only 25 percent of what they are due, and even this is contingent on ageing teenybopper John Blake being allowed to buy up Metro's share capital, its tax losses and its last remaining shreds of goodwill for only £25,000. However, this deal is not yet cut and dried.

Former chairman Ian Savage is bringing the rights issue balls-up to light, suggesting that Blake may yet have to win over the multitudes who invested in Metro but received no shares.

'Bookworm'



IN THE BACK

Pensions

THE TALES OF HOFFMAN

WHEN Robert Maxwell swiped a few hundred million from his workers' pension fund, he was breaking the law and would probably have gone to prison had he not drowned. Ever since his death big employers have been striving to follow his example but to avoid breaking the law in the process. Their efforts have been given a terrific boost by the law lords who have decided that it is perfectly legal for big employers to loot their pension funds for their own purposes.

The case was brought to the Lords by the big electricity companies privatised (against the ferocious opposition of Labour's then energy spokesman, one Tony Blair) in the early 1990s. The private electricity companies inherited a pension scheme worth £16bn, which was rather more than the price they paid for the entire industry (£12bn). Huge chunks of this crock of gold were classified as "surplus" – that is more than was necessary to pay niggardly pensions to the worker-members of the scheme.

National Power plc had a surplus on its scheme of £258m, and the company that took over from the old National Grid (now widely known in the industry as National Greed) had a surplus in its pension scheme of £63m.

The companies selflessly decided to split the money 70-30 – 30 percent in increased benefits to their pensioners and 70 percent to themselves. Two former National Grid workers, Dave Laws and Reg Mayes, complained to the pensions ombudsman. Their basic point was that money paid into the pension fund should be ring-fenced for pensions, and should not be touched by the employers.

The ombudsman, Dr Julian Farrand, agreed. He said there was a duty on the employer who had control of the pension scheme to act in good faith. Taking any of the surplus in a pension fund for the employers' own purposes was not acting in good faith. The ombudsman also referred to a clause in the scheme prohibiting any amendment "making any of the moneys in the scheme payable to the employers". He cited a 1994 case involving the Coal Staff pension scheme in which a high court judge specifically rejected the argument that pension fund money could be used by an employer to pay off an accrued debt. Since that was precisely what the electricity companies planned to do with their pension fund surplus, the ombudsman had little difficulty in coming down on the side of Mr Laws and Mr Mayes.

The ombudsman is appointed by the government, among other things to hear the complaints of members of the public about pensions. There is no charge for his services, and his stubborn defence of pensioners' rights has infuriated many employers and their high-paid lawyers. The electricity companies and their lawyers duly took Dr Farrand's determination to the high court.

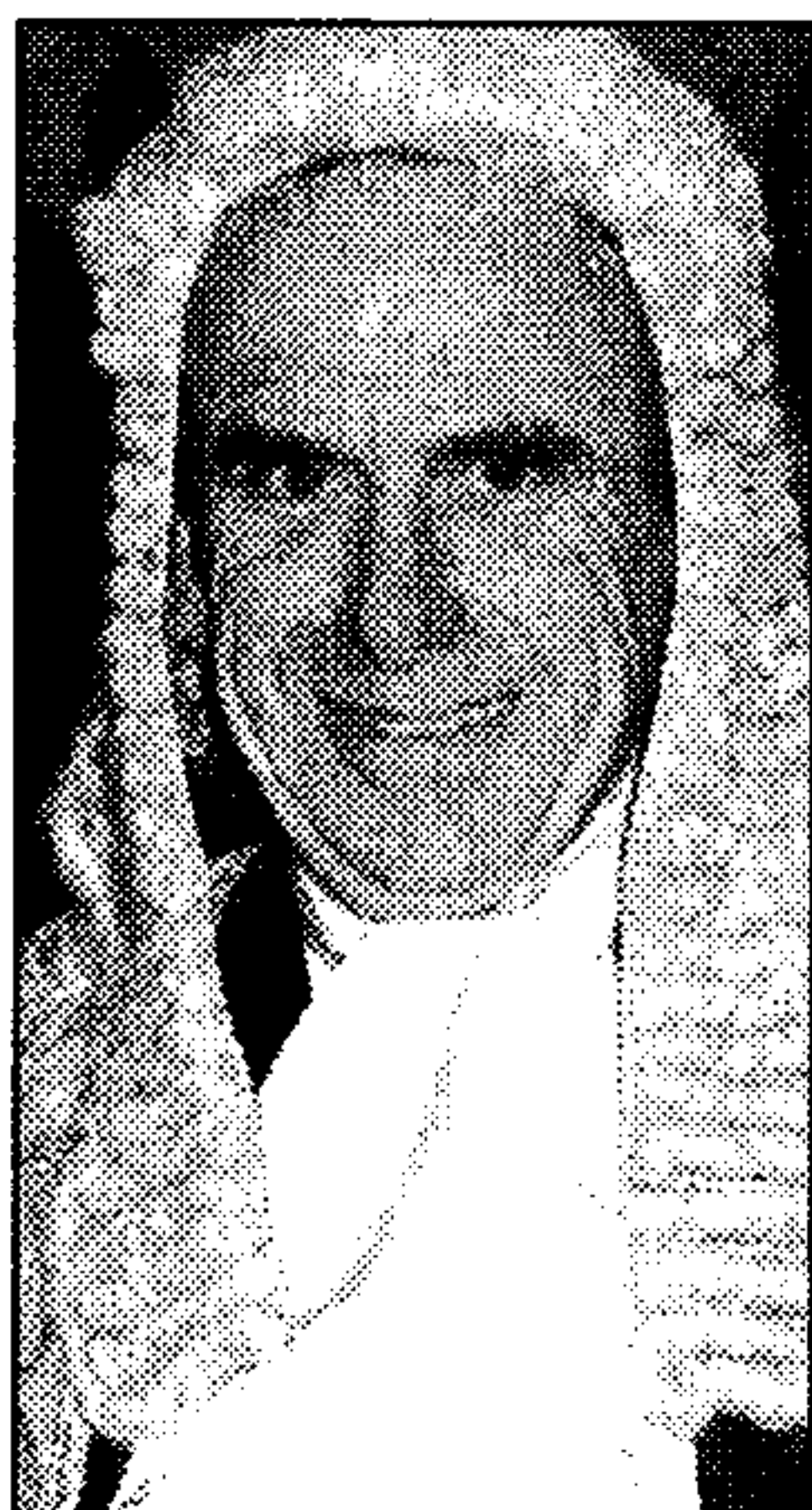
The case was heard by the newly-promoted Mr Justice Robert Walker, a friend of "new" Labour's lord chancellor, Lord Irvine. The judge overturned the ombudsman's determination and gave the nod to the companies effectively to do what they like with any pensions surplus. Laws and Mayes appealed again and celebrated when they were upheld by a unanimous judgement at the court of appeal.

Shocked, but determined and buoyed by the thought that their highly expensive lawyers would be paid for by the pensioners, the employers appealed again to the House of Lords. Five judges there unanimously overturned the court of appeal; and the British Coal case, thus allowing the employers to plunder pension funds for their own purposes.

"My Lords," announced Lord Hoffman, "I think

the main question in this appeal is whether the arrangements to treat accrued liabilities of the employers as discharged out of surplus funds amount to a payment to the employers out of the moneys of the scheme. Once that question has been decided, the other arguments fall into place."

Payment to the employers out of pension scheme money was plainly banned by law. But was paying off employers' debts the same thing as paying the employers?



Lord Hoffman

Most people with ordinary brains might find it hard to distinguish between paying out pension surplus money directly to the employer, and using the money to pay off the employer's debts. But Lord Hoffman's brain is not ordinary. After a detailed examination of what he called "the fiscal origin" of the clause banning payments from pension schemes to employers he concluded: "The release of a debt is not a payment, although it does have the same economic effect."

The British Coal case, in which a judge banned payments to employers, could, Lord Hoffman claimed, be safely set aside because counsel in that case had not drawn the judge's attention to the all-important "fiscal background" to the vital clause. Once you understood the fiscal background to the clause, in other words, the clause did not mean what it said. It said that payments from the pension fund should not be made to employers but it meant something else.

With this prodigious judgment, all the four other law lords – Slynn, Steyn, Clyde and Scott (he of the arms-to-Iraq inquiry) – enthusiastically concurred. The score was employers 5, pensioners nil. The employers could pay off their debts with the pension surplus. They rejoiced. So did their lawyers.

Gordon Pollock, worldwide partner of William M Mercer, was quoted in *Professional Pensions* of 12 April saying: "It is employers and not the beneficiaries who guarantee the fund. Any ruling that supports members as the owners of the fund surpluses could leave employers very exposed."

Down at the Commons Labour MPs were not so happy. Twenty four of them signed an early-day motion deploring the Lords decision and calling on the government to pass a new law restoring the immunity of pension money from employers' raids. Hounded by these backbenchers, the leader of the Commons Margaret Beckett, once a doughty campaigner against pensions privatisation, signified her sympathy with the idea of a new law but made it clear that sadly there was nothing she could do about it.

COOKING THE EVIDENCE

ALLAN Cook was assaulted and badly beaten up for no reason by two officers from the Metropolitan police. He was then charged with seriously assaulting the police who beat him and subjected to a year's anxious delay on bail until the case came to court. Once in court he was hurriedly acquitted after an embarrassing video came to light making nonsense of the police story...

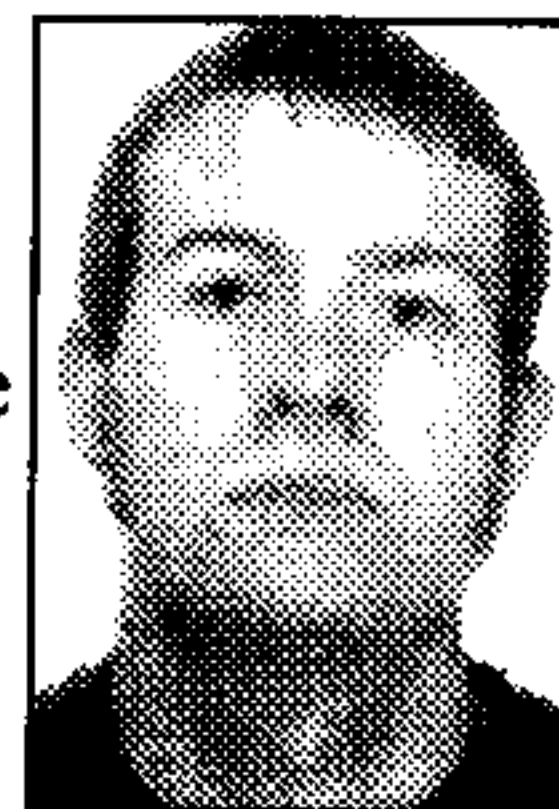
On 10 December 1997, Mr Cook was a promising 19-year-old student at Kingston University. As the term ended for Christmas, he and a mate went out to celebrate. After a few drinks they left a nightclub in Kingston and started to make their way home. They were larking about, wrestling playfully with each other and making jokes, when two police officers swooped on them, separated them and detained them in a tight grip.

Allan found himself on the ground, his face shoved again and again on to the pavement, while he was handcuffed from behind. He was forcibly thrown into a police van where he temporarily lost consciousness. He was taken to Kingston police station and locked up in a cell all night. He was systematically abused and insulted and told, to his surprise, "you fucker, you broke her arm".

When he finally got to Kingston magistrates' court, the police opposed bail on the unlikely (and unsuccessful) ground that he would vanish. He was charged with affray and grievous bodily harm, but the case did not come to Kingston crown court until 7 December 1998, almost a year after the incident.

The first day's hearing was intensely embarrassing for the Met. The woman police officer whose arm was meant to have been broken, was shown to have merely damaged a bone in her hand, making the violence she described incredible. The worst moment for the prosecution though was the showing of a CCTV video from a jeweller's shop near the scene of the assault. The video, covering almost the whole event, showed Allan Cook nervously moving away from the police in exactly the way he described. The prosecution tried to argue that his whole demeanour must have changed in the seven seconds he did not appear on the video, but the game was up and the charges were dropped...

The incident continued to haunt the young man, whose performance at college slumped. He sued the police for malicious prosecution. His father rang the *Eye* more than a year ago to seek advice. Eventually, last month the case was settled out of court, with the Met agreeing to pay £17,500.



Allan Cook

A LESSON IN PRIVATISATION

TONY BLAIR chose to launch his general election campaign while at a school in working class Southwark where he was re-emphasising his party's commitment to "education, education, education" in particular and to public services in general.

Whoops! His attempt to inspire traditional Labour voters was rather spoiled by the fact that under education secretary David Blunkett's "outsourcing" programme, Southwark's local education authority has been handed over to the Tory-oriented private firm WS Atkins, which pays Tory MP Archie Hamilton up to £10,000 a year as a "consultant".

However, anyone who really wants to understand the process of flogging off council education services to private firms that are forever taking each other over should really visit the north London borough of Waltham Forest.

There, after an unflattering Ofsted report into the council's education department last year, the council handed over a number of valuable management and advisory education services to PPI, a private firm. PPI was then bought by another private education firm called Tribal, co-founder of another private firm

called Ensign – which was bidding for a £15m contract from Waltham Forest council to run the same services!

Waltham Forest council assured the London *Evening Standard* that "Chinese walls" within the council would prevent any conflict of interest. But something terrible must have happened to those walls.

In March it was disclosed that Tribal, on one side of the wall, had offered £5,000 each to two partners in PPI, on the other side of the wall, if the bid by Ensign was successful. One of the men offered £5,000 was John Haslett. Mr Haslett is employed and paid by PPI, but his full-time job, over the other side of the Chinese wall, is acting deputy director of education for Waltham Forest borough council.

The payments were revealed in the course of a diligent search of documents by yet another private education firm called Nord Anglia, part of yet another private education consortium called EduAction. The revelations led to a bit of a stink in Waltham Forest. As a result, Tribal (including Ensign and PPI) have withdrawn from the tender process, leaving only one bidder in place – Nord Anglia, the firm that exposed its competitors and has now as good as won the £15m contract!

ANOTHER BLOODY DISGRACE

BRTAIN's stricken haemophilic community is facing a new crisis, the *Eye* has learnt. Those recently shattered by the news that they had been exposed to the human form of mad cow disease via contaminated blood products have since been refused medical treatment.

It seems some health authorities and trusts, concerned about contamination, are awaiting guidance from the department of health before agreeing to treat patients known to have been exposed to new-variant Creutzfeld Jakob disease (nvCJD).

Because of damage caused to their joints by constant "bleeds", haemophiliacs often need hip, knee and elbow replacements. One patient at the Royal Orthopaedic hospital in Birmingham has been told he cannot have his knee replaced because of the risk of his contaminating equipment – not until a national policy is decided, anyway.

If a person actually has nvCJD, all medical and surgical equipment has to be destroyed after use because the usual heat-cleaning process actually enhances the survival of the prion involved in the disease's transmission. With orthopaedic saws and drills costing some £6,000 a go, and with a knee operation involving literally hundreds of pieces of metal equipment, the costs of each operation would be huge.

Andrew Thomas, consultant orthopaedic surgeon at the Birmingham hospital said: "This is a real problem... But I do not want people thinking we are

just sitting around waiting for the health department to act. We have put forward suggestions — like covering equipment in plastic, which can then be destroyed. And we are extremely sympathetic to the haemophiliacs who keep being hit by one thing after another. But none are being adversely affected by the delay in their operations. If they presented as an emergency, like appendicitis or something, then of course they would receive instant treatment."

David Tonkin, another haemophilic from the Midlands, was initially refused dental treatment after a filling fell out. Four days later, and when he was in agony with toothache, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham agreed to treat him. Every piece of equipment used for his dental work has now been put "in quarantine" pending department instructions.

"The bad blood products has been one huge medical catastrophe — everyone knows that — and still we are treated with contempt," said Mr Tonkin.

The reaction of some of the medical fraternity to their haemophilic patients would appear to contradict the health department's line that the risk of contracting nvCJD from contaminated blood is only "theoretical" and haemophiliacs have nothing to fear.

Said Carol Grayson, of Haemophilia Action: "The department [of health] cannot have it both ways. Either the risk is 'theoretical' and haemophiliacs should be cared for in the same way as everyone else or it isn't and special procedures need to be introduced as a matter of urgency to ensure haemophiliacs get the medical treatment they need."

MMR: COURT IN THE ACT

A LANDMARK ruling in the French appeal courts last week against UK vaccine manufacturer Glaxo SmithKline passed almost unnoticed by the British media. Yet potentially it has huge importance for the 3,000 UK families now seeking to sue SmithKline and another vaccine company over damage they say was caused to their children by the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) jab.

Although the French legal action involved the hepatitis B vaccine which the appeal judges decided had triggered multiple sclerosis (MS) in two women, the significance to the UK triple jab case is two-fold.

Crucially, it is the first time a court has decided that while there are no scientific studies which either prove or disprove a causal link between the vaccine and

illness — often an insurmountable barrier to litigation — courts can reach a decision based on "serious, precise presumptions and similar evidence".

That is vital to the UK litigants, who while armed with a growing dossier of research suggesting links between vaccination and disease, so far have no study which proves the case one way or the other.

Secondly, a significant number of the UK claimants are alleging the triple vaccine caused devastating nerve-damaging conditions similar to MS — like Guillain Barre syndrome and transverse myelitis. The assertion is that, as with the cases of autism, the vaccine triggers a peculiar auto-immune reaction in some susceptible children. In the cases of MS, Guillain-Barre and myelitis, it is said to cause the body to attack the protective myelin sheath that covers the nervous system, gradually

stripping it away.

As the *Eye* has already reported, many of the children with rare regressive autism, which their families allege was triggered by the triple jab, have curiously been found to have the measles virus in their gut. Also recent research from the US has found that some of the children with regressive autism also have myelin sheath damage.

Our government, of course, would have parents believe that research actually disproved the link (*Eyes passim*). But last month the American Immunisations Safety Review Committee said that while evidence "favours rejection of a causal relationship at a population level" [ie based on epidemiology only] between the triple jab and autism, it could not "exclude the possibility that MMR could contribute to autism in a small number of children".



Camelford: Pleased to Meacher?

WILL Michael Meacher, environment minister, survive in a future Labour government? His fate is in the balance. Compared with most of his colleagues, he has been an efficient minister. But, ignoring his massive property portfolio, he shows dangerous tendencies towards Old Labour principles and sympathy for hated species such as ramblers and the victims of industrial pollution.

Almost his last act was to try to persuade his colleague, health minister Yvette Cooper, to do something to satisfy victims of the disaster at Camelford, north Cornwall, in 1988 when water supplies were contaminated by aluminium sulphate mistakenly tipped into water treatment works on the edge of Bodmin Moor.

The accident coincided with water privatisation and was hushed up by the Tory government and the new private water company, South West Water. Tiny dribbles of compensation were paid to people with illnesses or injuries that could be proved to have flowed directly from the poisoning. The Tory government was pressed by the opposition to hold a public inquiry but refused.

Ann Taylor, then Labour's spokeswoman, promised a public inquiry. So did Jack Cunningham, who became Labour's environment spokesman. But as soon as "new" Labour took power, with Taylor and Cunningham in the Cabinet, the pledge was junked.

Last summer Mr Meacher accepted an invitation from North Cornwall Lib Dem MP Paul Tyler to speak to victims of the disaster. About 70 people attended a meeting in Camelford. In an interview with the *Western Morning News*, Meacher said he had been "rocked as a result of this meeting". He added: "My mind is shifting as to what we can do next." He assured the victims: "I have not come down here just to go off again and get on with life. I am going to see this through."

Meacher was said to have been specially impressed by a speech at the meeting by June Hills from St Tudy, near Bodmin. She said she had been diagnosed with a form of Alzheimer's disease as a direct result, she believed, of drinking the contaminated water. The link between exposure to water supplies contaminated with aluminium sulphate and long-term cognitive deficiency such as Alzheimer's disease was established by research at the Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford, published in the *British Medical Journal* in September 1999.

Twenty thousand people, far outside the boundaries of Camelford, were affected by the water poisoning disaster, yet still there has not been any form of public investigation. Though pressed by Meacher, Yvette Cooper is very "new" Labour and has not been inclined to precipitate action. No action is expected until after the election, but by then it maybe too late for Michael Meacher.

PIPE DREAMS

THE news desk at the London *Evening Standard* got terribly excited when it got a tip-off of a dawn raid by Scotland Yard's terrorist squad.

YARD SWOOP ON BOMB FACTORY was its front-page headline on the day of the raid, Thursday 1 February. So dramatic was its account, it seemed that at least one of the reporters, Justin Davenport and Martin McGlown, must have been with the police when they swooped on the suspect house at dawn.

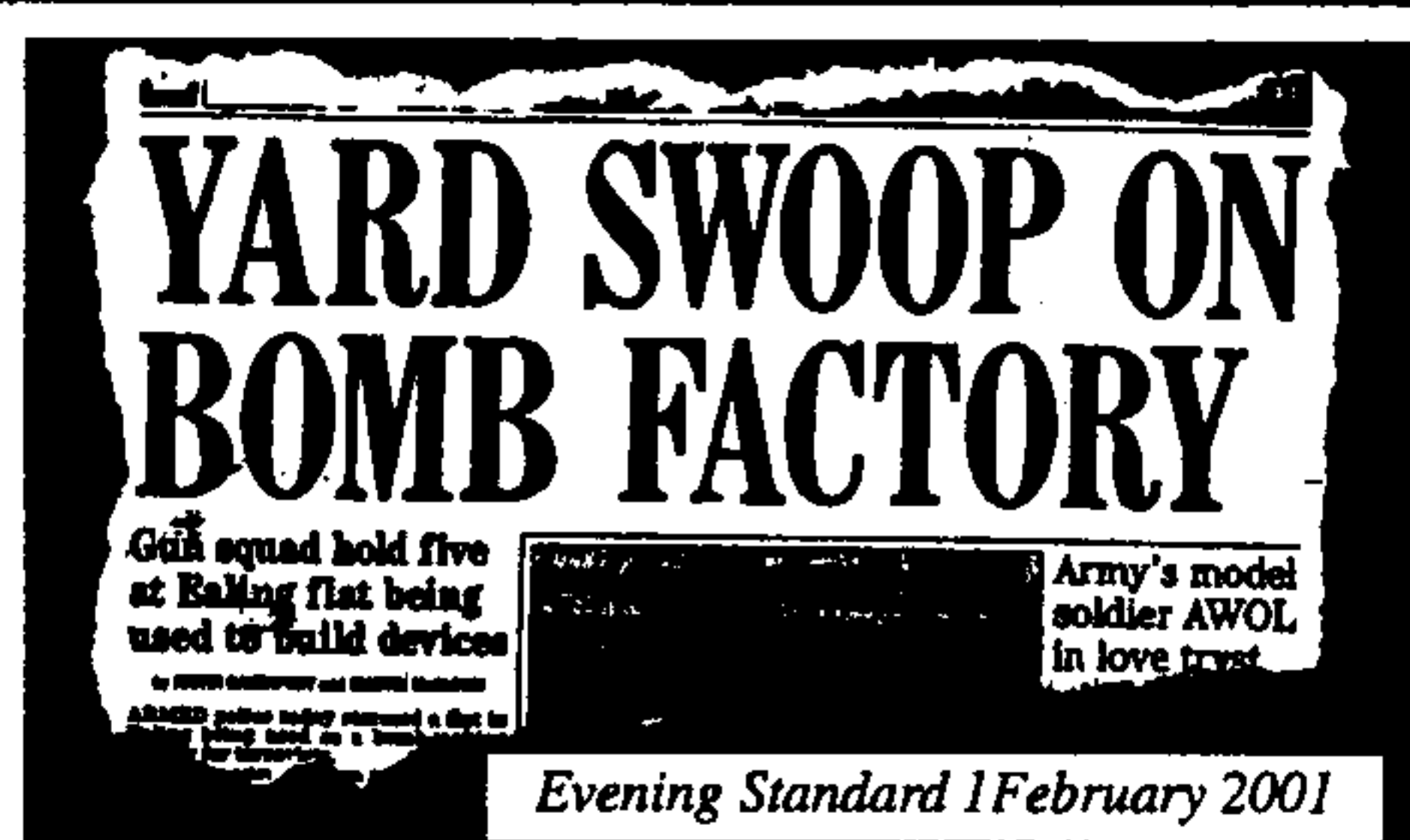
A street was cordoned off, neighbours evacuated and forensic experts joined in the raid. "The Yard later said the arrested men were Irish," the reporters disclosed. And who were the suspects? The *Standard* speculated: "The most likely possibility is that the group is an 'active service unit' connected to one of the dissident Irish groups plotting a series of attacks on London targets." The reporters added a

grim warning. "In the months before Christmas Scotland Yard warned of the possibility of an Omagh-style car bomb in central London."

Much of this was repeated in other papers the next day and on various news websites. But wait. What happened to the arrested men?

They were charged under the explosives act and remanded in custody to appear at the Old Bailey. They spent three weeks as category A prisoners in the dungeon which is Belmarsh prison, and finally appeared in the dock at the Old Bailey on 2 April. The Scotland Yard press bureau tells the *Eye*: "After discussions between the Metropolitan Police Service and Crown Prosecution Service lawyers, the CPS decided, with the support of the MPS, to discontinue proceedings against the four people as there was no realistic chance of conviction."

The men walked free. What had happened? Why was the case dropped? Why did this story not appear on the front page of the *Evening Standard*? The *Eye*'s information suggests that the anti-terrorist



officers swoop was inspired by an informant, and that the case collapsed when it emerged that the likeliest suspect for the making of a pipe bomb was... the informant himself. The *Eye* put this possibility to the Yard's press bureau and got the following reply: "We are not prepared to discuss such speculation." Perhaps they would discuss it with the *Evening Standard* whose readers must be wondering what on earth is going on?



In the City

THE man responsible for the illustrious career of ace City fixer Sir Michael Richardson likely ending ignominiously in disgrace is veteran advance fee conman Alan Shephard. It was to help Shephard that Richardson wrote two letters to Swiss financial institutions while at NatWest offshoot Hawkpoint Partners, despite NatWest making it crystal clear it wanted nothing to do with this serial fraudster.

For reasons connected with anticipated big fees from future deals, Richardson ignored this clear warning from NatWest, hiding behind the incredible excuse that he believed this referred to the bank itself, not to its associates such as Hawkpoint, a corporate finance outfit.

Nor was that all that Richardson did for the man *Private Eye* exposed as long ago as 1977 under the heading "The Fraud is My Shephard". Richardson also allowed himself to be listed by the twice bankrupt, once arrested Shephard as a reference with his address given as "Vice Chairman, NatWest Group".

When one of those who was shown the Hawkpoint headed letter offering to raise finance for Shephard checked with NatWest, Richardson was gone in 60 seconds at the end of 1999. Not only that but NatWest passed on its concerns to the Securities & Futures Authority over Richardson disobeying a clear instruction and for compromising the bank by linking it to Shephard who is or should be on every bank's banned list.

Because of the investigation Richardson has been unable since to obtain a full registration with the SFA and so has been prevented from acting in a full capacity as a broker/adviser.

Now it is Richardson who faces a lifetime ban from the City for his greed and stupidity. After spending all of last year and up until a few weeks ago working out of boutique bankers Dawnay Day, the longtime adviser to Lady Thatcher and former loyal Maxwellite now faces enforced retirement in the wilderness. He is appealing the SFA's proposed ban, but at 76 it is unlikely he will escape punishment unless perhaps he agrees to a voluntary exit from the City.

Why NatWest was so right to refuse to do business with Shephard and why Richardson was so wrong is obvious to those who know Alan Shephard's record – and that means leading law enforcement and regulatory bodies on both sides of the Atlantic.

Shephard's Richardson-blessed cv shows his *modus operandi*. It is peppered with seemingly impressive achievements and connections. But none of that is what it seems – other than his date of birth and that he went to Harrow. It also omits, not surprisingly, certain more crucial information.

"Regular Officer, 3rd Kings Own Hussars, ADC HRH The Princess Margaret". Not true. Shephard was a National Service officer and was never the ADC to Princess Margaret.

"Managing Director" at US brokers Donaldson, Lufkin & Jennette and Lehman Brothers. Shephard worked for both as a "vice president", like so many others, for a short time until both firms decided to live without him. While at DLJ in Hong Kong during the early 80s Shephard and a partner took \$250,000

from an Australian businessman for a \$380m loan that never materialised. The deal was described in the high court as an "international fraud".

"Member of Senior Management" at Credit Suisse. Shephard worked as a marketing officer for the Guernsey branch of the Swiss bank in the early 90s. While there he took almost \$2m in advance fees for phoney loans promised by his offshore Puffin Investment company to four American businessmen. The Americans complained and the City police investigated but no further action was taken. By then Shephard was living in the US where he resides in a Virginia mansion and operates through a Washington accommodation address.

"Vice President. The Royal Windsor Horse Show. Patron HM The Queen". Shephard bought this with part of the \$2m proceeds of another bogus loan fraud paying for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police show team to appear last year just days after he was discharged from his second bankruptcy. Ironically the RCMP had investigated Shephard for advance fee fraud in the 70s.

"US Representative. Army Benevolent Fund." Not true. However, Shephard has twice sponsored ABF charities. The last time in May 2000 with \$100,000 which was part of the proceeds of the \$2m taken for loans that never came from victims here and in the US.

"US Representative. The Prince's Trust. President, HRH The Prince of Wales." Not true.

Omitted from Shephard's impressive cv is the fact that he was made bankrupt in 1984 and again in 1994. The second time was a fall-out from the first \$2m fraud after he had guaranteed to sponsor the Hickstead show jumping event. Shephard obtained his discharge in May last year after claiming he was a penniless charity worker with modest income. He did not disclose the \$2m received by Puffin into its Florida bank account only the day before he was discharged.

Also omitted was Shephard's arrest by the FBI in 1977 after complaints by advance fee victims of his Barnes International Trust. Shephard avoided indictment by entering into a civil settlement to compensate three victims in 1979.

Shephard's partner in Barnes was Canadian Raymond Lanciault who had convictions for cheque fraud and theft. Lanciault was his partner in the \$250,000 scam on the Australian businessman. Lanciault's fictitious Martini Foundation was also used by Shephard to hoodwink British film producer Don Boyd out of £5,000 in 1983.

Remarkably during the past 12 months Shephard has featured in investigations by the SFA into Sir Michael Richardson and by the Financial Services Authority into a less illustrious Nottingham financial adviser Michael Dinmore. Dinmore handed over more than £500,000 from clients to Puffin in return for an anticipated \$200m loan which was to be invested in an equally illusory high return investment scheme.

The Dinmore money plus more than \$1m from US victims went into the Puffin bank account and was then distributed to Shephard and his friends. More than £400,000 went on horses for Shephard's daughter, including £150,000 from an earlier loan scam on a British victim. Another £50,000 went to his sister. His helpful old pal Sir Edward du Cann, the former Tory MP, received £50,000. Shephard paid away this money, sharing £1m with his Spanish-based associate Michael Hadley (who also appears in other Shephard bogus loan cons which have separated New

Stock Horror

British Telecom hangs up on shareholders

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*The company is now asking shareholders for more money

Zealand and South African victims from almost \$1m in fees), despite the fact that all the fees were supposedly repayable if there was no loan and there has been no loan.

In these circumstances it would not be surprising if the SFA found Sir Michael Richardson as unappealing as Alan Shephard.

INFORMATION technology consultant Graham Browne has been committed for trial at the Old Bailey in September charged with attempting to obtain £25m from an unidentified financial institution.

The blackmail demand – which Browne denies – concerns an alleged threat to compromise the security of Barclays' vital Barclaycard operation. It is said the threat was rated so seriously that the eight million customers' cards might have had to be replaced.

Browne, 57 and from Cheshire, pleaded not guilty at an Old Bailey hearing on 1 May. The alleged blackmail demands were made between March and September last year. A key Barclaycard computer centre is at Knutsford, Cheshire.

Banks have become increasingly sensitive to publicity regarding security breaches because they impact on customer confidence. Security of customer personal financial data is paramount.

Barclays was hit by two unrelated but embarrassing security breaches last year before Browne was arrested. One forced the temporary closure of its internet banking operation.

'Slicker'

Number £2.6m

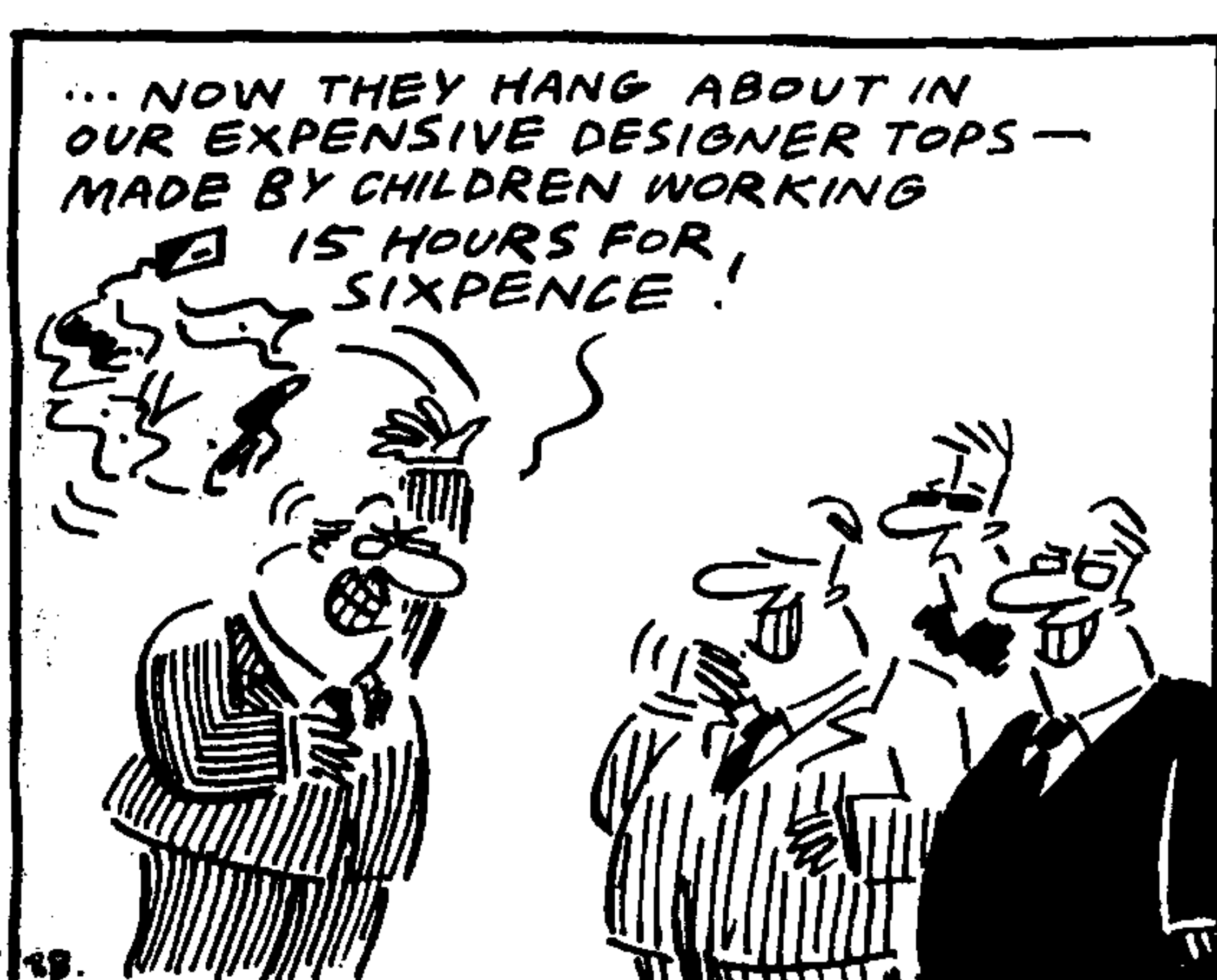
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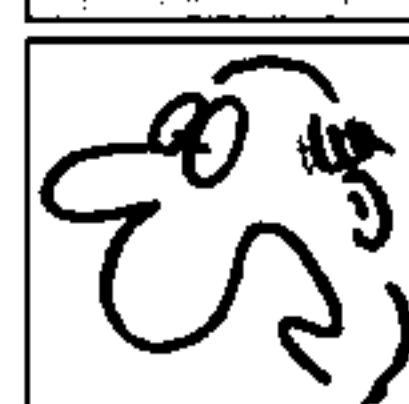
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EYE LOVE

INSPIRATION, PERSPIRATION — architect and lover required! Tall, Dark, Under 50. South. Box 1428.

BEAUTIFUL, CLEVER woman, 40+, — rightly suspicious of cappuccinos and serendipitous meanderings — seeks intelligent, handsome, solvent man, 40+, without bestfriend wife or secretarial girlfriend. Box 1228.

OFFICER AND GENTLEMAN required to help alleviate insomnia due to lack of exercise! Photo and handwriting please. South. Box 0228.

NICE CHAP, 35, single, attractive, intelligent, solvent etc. seeks female for correspondence initially. Photo appreciated. Box 1328.

WOULD YOU MOVE TO SPAIN IF YOU MET THE RIGHT MAN?

Are you a slim, attractive, n/s, caring, financially and emotionally secure woman up to 50?
Tall, slim, mature, multilingual Englishman wltm you.
Letter and recent photo essential.
Box 0828.

TAO 365 — life enhancing male wanted for tall, sensitive insightful female — for walking, talking, travel, theatre, fun and fitness. Under 55, dark hair and time! Photo and handwriting please. South Box 1028.

ENGLISH PUBLISHER. 52/177 inconsequentially successful, sporadically amusing, a few baubles, bored by conversation with the neighbour's dog and occupying his bed like a starfish — wishes to meet intelligent, unconventional, sensuous, younger woman, looking for appreciative man with whom to share thoughts, desires — serendipitous meandering, sometimes silence, and eventually perhaps, a duvet. Box 1628.

MIDSUMMER NIGHT S Dream — voluptuous Titania needed to complement Bottom of attached male 48 — Wales/West/anywhere. inswordsmen@bulletinmail.com

SENSUAL WOMAN sought for friend/lover by warm sensitive articulate male, young sixties, open marriage. Enjoys arts, conversation good food/ wine. Looking for worthwhile relationship. Box 0128.

WOMAN with assertive nature sought by intelligent man, 40s. Tall, fit, professional and keen to comply with her wishes. London/SE. Box 0628.

ATTRACTIVE WOMAN GRADUATE, 37, attached, needs extrovert man for crazy nights. Surrey/Sussex border — dirtyandsweetuk@yahoo.co.uk

MALE, 49, tall, slim, semi-detached city professional. Outside interests essentially artistic, travel etc. — would like to meet a woman 35-45 with similar interests. I look forward to hearing from you. Box 0328.

AGEING FRANCOPHILE, young 56, seeks slimish lady with gsoh for discreet uncommitted fun plus possible luncheon trips to France. Hertfordshire area. Box 1128.

DEEP, HANDSOME, attached Wirral male (33) seeking chilled, slim, playmate for discreet trysts and friendship. Your desires our pleasure — fantasyshare@yahoo.co.uk — 07960 432703.

ARMY CAPTAIN — 27, attractive, charming, humorous, intelligent and adventurous — seeks female 20-35 for fun relationship. Box 0728.

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Record numbers of single people this year have already decided – **they do!** The Association of British Introduction Agencies have reported a 35% increase in registrations for the first quarter of '99 over that of previous years. In fact we've seen our own membership jump by an amazing 50% this year so far. So if you want to meet the partner of your dreams then **now** really is an ideal time to do it. You could find the person you have been looking for – a partner or a friend. Someone who is always there for you, a person who completely understands you and accepts you for yourself. However discerning you are – Dateline makes the search for your perfect partner really simple. In terms of service and the number of people you can meet we provide real value – probably the best investment in your social life and future you could ever wish to make.

Stop Press: Partners Wanted!

We have many thousands of people from all walks of life and all areas of Britain just waiting to be matched with compatible partners. One of them may be YOUR perfect partner – it could even be one of the following, real-life examples of our members*.

■ **Samantha, 26**, from Southampton, is a slim and attractive Hotel Receptionist. She enjoys eating out and the cinema and considers herself affectionate and adventurous.

■ **Jeremy** from Truro is a 44 year old teacher. He loves the theatre, cinema and enjoys cooking and entertaining at home. He also enjoys travelling abroad and sightseeing. He is intellectual but also friendly and considerate.

■ **Christina** is a 42 year old Manager from Chester. An attractive non-smoker, she enjoys social drinking, dinner parties and the cinema. She describes herself as confident and friendly.

■ **John** is a 25 year old Pensions Administrator from Ashford. He is a non-smoker and occasional drinker who enjoys sport, motoring and mixing with friends. He considers himself to be patient, reliable and positive.

■ **Paula** is 20, averagely attractive and from London. She is a chef who enjoys listening to pop music, going to parties and clubs. She also enjoys watching television and keeping fit and is lively and fashionable.

■ **David** is a 55 year old Chartered Engineer from Leeds. In his spare time he enjoys a mixture of classical and pop/rock music as well as walking, DIY and keeping fit. He describes himself as sensitive and ambitious.

*Names have been changed for reasons of privacy.

YOUR DETAILS

Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Ms ☐

Surname: _____

First Name: _____

Address: _____

Post Code: _____

Tel No. _____

I am seriously interested in meeting a partner through Dateline.

Marital Status:

- ☐ Single ☐ Divorced
☐ Widowed ☐ Separated

Age: _____ Height: _____

Occupation _____

Religion: _____

Build:

- ☐ Slight
☐ Medium
☐ Large

Attractiveness:

- ☐ V. Attractive
☐ Attractive
☐ Average

YOUR PERSONALITY

Tick which traits closely describe you

- ☐ Affectionate ☐ Fashionable
☐ Serious ☐ Practical
☐ Considerate ☐ Conventional
☐ Shy ☐ Reliable
☐ Romantic ☐ Adventurous

YOUR INTERESTS

Please tick for a liking, cross for a dislike or leave blank for no pref.

- ☐ Wining/Dining ☐ Jazz/Folk music
☐ Pubs ☐ Classical music
☐ Sports/Keep fit ☐ Theatre/Arts
☐ Politics/History ☐ Watching TV
☐ Reading ☐ Smoking
☐ Travelling ☐ Mixing with friends
☐ Science/Tech ☐ Children
☐ Cinema ☐ Homemaking
☐ Pets/Animals ☐ Gardening
☐ Pop music ☐ Countryside

Dept. PE 88

YOUR ATTITUDES

Tick for yes, cross for no or leave blank if you don't feel strongly

- ☐ I prefer town life
☐ I involve myself in community activities
☐ I have many friends of my own sex
☐ I am interested in current affairs
☐ I am looking for one special relationship
☐ I like team activities
☐ My work makes it difficult to meet new people
☐ I want to extend my social life as well as finding a special relationship

YOUR IDEAL PARTNER

Min. age: _____ Max. age: _____

Height: min. _____ max. _____

☐ Don't mind

Marital Status:

- ☐ Single ☐ Divorced
☐ Widowed ☐ Separated
☐ Don't mind

Build:

- ☐ Slight
☐ Medium
☐ Large

Attractiveness:

- ☐ V. Attractive
☐ Attractive
☐ Average

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